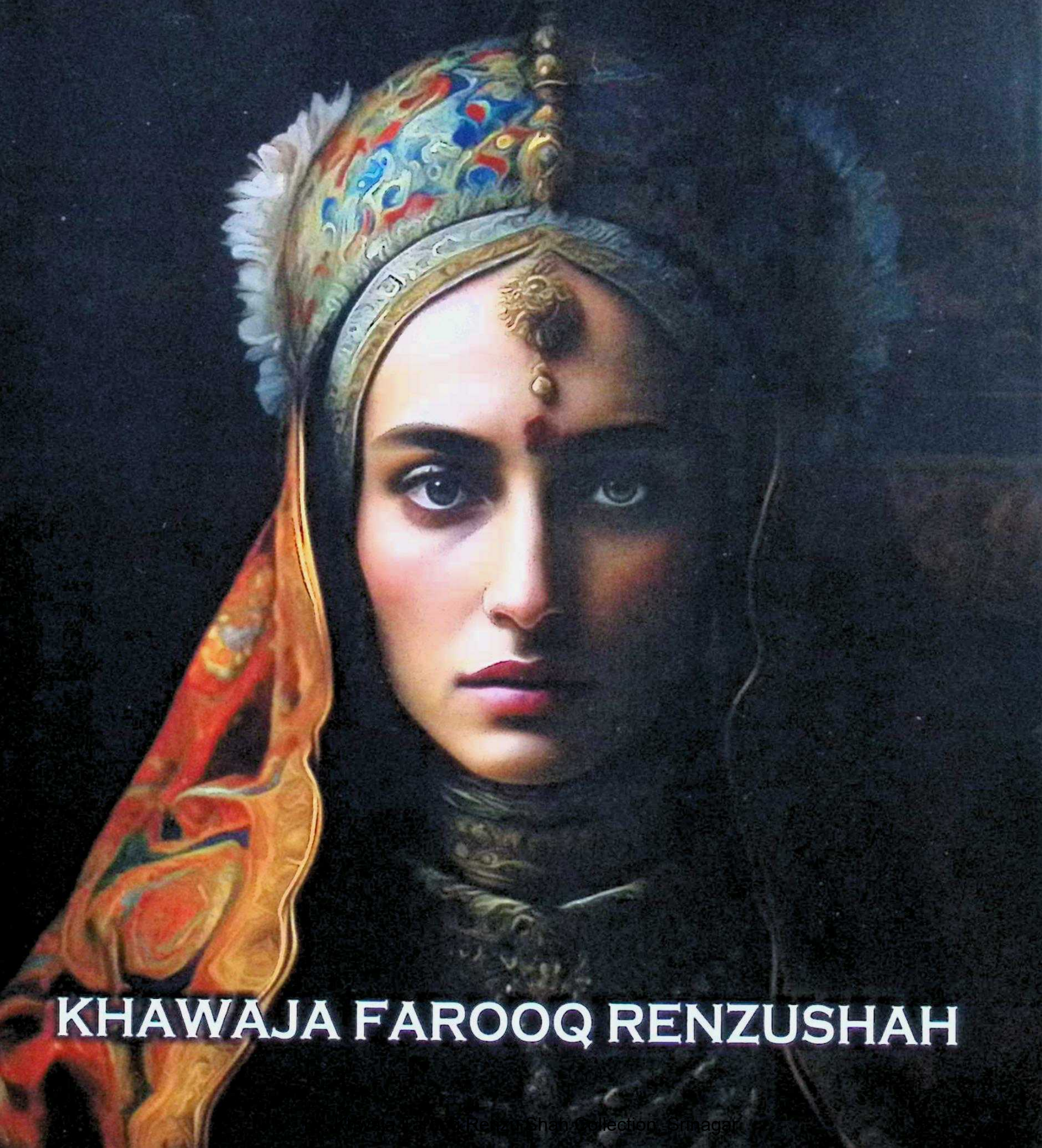
SULTANA KOTA RANI
RESHI QUEEN
OF CASHMERE



KHAWAJA FAROOQ RENZUSHAH

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This book on *"Sultana Kota Rani -Reshi Queen of Cashmere"* is not only historical and spiritual commentary on crucial ancient period early 14th century of my valley of Cashmere but one of my serious assignment to present each reflections and cogitations with spiritual elaborations.

History of early 14th century when Mongol Terror struck Cashmere the great sons and daughters of Cashmere sacrificed their lives to protect their divine paradise from complete elimination and annihilation. At that juncture contribution of great historical personality of Cashmere Sultana Kota Rani proved very significant to protect high values of our ancient Civilization and Culture.

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Reshi Queen Of Cashmere

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About the Proofreader

The book Sultana Kota Rani underwent rigorous proofreading under the supervision of Arkam Javeed, whose meticulous precision, extensive grammatical expertise, and professional experience ensured an unparalleled standard of linguistic accuracy. Every aspect of the manuscript, from syntax and semantics to punctuation and style consistency, was scrutinized with meticulous attention to detail.

About the Book

My present Research book, "Sultana Kota Rani – Reshi Queen of Cashmere" is not only historical and spiritual commentary on crucial ancient period early 14th century of my valley of Cashmere but one of my serious assignment to present each reflections and cogitations with spiritual elaborations.

History of early 14th century when Mongol Terror struck Cashmere the great sons and daughters of Cashmere sacrificed their lives to protect their divine paradise from complete elimination and annihilation. The historical role of such great icons of Cashmere who preserved lofty ideologies of humanity and pluralism in Cashmere has not yet been fairly presented because of persistent religious, regional and faith conflicts.

I devoted myself to conduct comprehensive research to enlighten in detail the lovers of cashmere about such great personality Sultana Kota Rani who played significant role in history at crucial time to protect high values of our ancient Civilization and Culture.

While scripting this book I have frequently used Cashmere rather than Common and present name of Valley as Kashmir the reason being my fervent desire to highlight features and figure of the great Civilization of past referred in distinguished encyclopaedia's and chronicles as Cashmere. About the strong character of this valley various prominent Western historians or Greek historians referred it as Cashyap's Cashmera. I accordingly decided to refer my Cashmere in English vocabulary in same fashion to underscore every time about its four thousand years rich background.

Hiun Tsang discovered Cashmere as seat of Knowledge, Sharda Paeth, in 6th century. At that time major portion of ancient China including Shanzi, Cashgaria present Xinjing, Yarqand, Tibet, Ladakh, Gilgit, Baltistan were under the sovereign control of Cashmere. Later in subsequent centuries Lalita Datiya Muktapada proud emperor of Cashmere expanded Cashmere Sovereignty up to Khurasan. This is same 8th century when Abdul Rahaman Abu Musalim was most prominent Sufi administrator of Khurassan who brought Banu Umaya Umayyad's 80 years empire down to ground by killing Marwan 2nd last king of Umayyad. The time coincide with triumphs of lalata datiya Muktapada of Cashmere. In Khurasan Reshi cave gupt culturs was in vogue and same was in Kanoj India. Lalata Datiya Muktapada great emperor of Cashmere brought first Reshi Saint Attri Gupta ancestral of Abhinav Gupta to Cashmere in 8th century.

In China Particularly on Ren Mountains of Nowha and Focusi Khafiya {Gupt} mysticism was in prominence and cave meditation was considered foundations of all faiths. The Gupt [Khafiya] Reshism was introduced on throne of Takhat e Sulaiman through Sundariya Lahri of Shankrachariya and later on Abhenav Gupta continued the same in 10th and 11th century.

In such rich spiritual background emergence of Sultana Kota Rani in most crucial period of history early 14th century has special Connotation. The inextricable conundrum of historical facts of Cashmere puts onus on each fair and honest narrator and researcher to conduct fair and deep study of each fact and eachsituation rather than believing contradictory versions of contradictory brand of biased religious bigots. In comparative study of various versions of such bigots who support or oppose each historical character on basis of their own liking or disliking based on their own Religious criteria.

It is therefore essential to dichotomise Visages of each historical personality as per the ideology he or she stood for.

While researching the historical facts about Sultana Kota Rani from books of radical ideologues we find few radicles accuse Sultana Kota Rani for marrying Buddist King and later joining her husband in following Sufi Saint Hazrat Bulbulshah as per Islamic doctrines which is beyond their tolerance. They avoid to point out how she stood for Cashmere when it's Prime Minister and its emperor abandoned it and she was only philanthropic entity who opposed cowardice character of emperor and prime Minister who were afraid to resist terror and save their own subjects.

Similarly radical Islamist scholars also ignored to throw full light to project high contribution of Sultana Kota Rani who was first female of Cashmere to submit before spirituality of Hazrat Bulbulshah along with her husband Sultan Sader ud Deen Renchenshah. They prefer to praise Sultan Sikinder Iconoclast who burnt Hindu Temples, Buddist vihars and Khankah's. They write eulogies for him and shower praises for pandit Suha Bhatta who converted as terror Islamist named Saif Malik but are critical to Sultana Kota Rani who stood like rock to ensure renaissance of composite culture of all three major faiths Islam, Hinduism and Buddism in Cashmere. The similar document of Renaissance was adopted in western countries which they call as secularism.

Serious, Comprehensive and deep research of Cashmere reveal that Sultana Kota Rani's contribution in saving Cashmere from collapse has been deliberately ignored by many. Her steadfast approach to attain same glory for Cashmere has not been properly appreciated as it deserved by radicals and bigots of either faiths.

When Terror forces of Mongol Tataries under Zulqader Khan referred by Translator of Raj Tarangni, Dr. Stain as Zulji and G.M.D Sufi as dalcha or dulcha, struck cashmere history present only Sultana Kota Rani of Cashmere who fluttered flag of resistance against terror. She was obsessed with strong determination to save her Cashmere while all others betrayed or escaped like King Suha Devoe.

Sultana Kota Rani stood not only against only her own father Ramachandra Prime Minister of Cashmere but tried her best to stop Suha devoe Emperor of Cashmere to escape along treasure of Yarqand Saraie treasury at out skirts of City which has been elaborated in this research book on basis of this historical fact of escape of king. Suha Devoe rebuffed her and succeeded to escape towards Kishtwar abandoning people of Cashmere un protected, was biggest tragedy of Cashmere.

Readers may have to momentarily embark adventurous voyage to discover truth out of each fact of the crises when Zulqader Khan Dalcha put entire Cashmere on fire. His soldiers raped women, plundered city, burnt and demolished Hindu and Buddist religious institutions, slaughtered Reshi saints and ploughed the caves of seers and saga's by converting them to death cells. These revelations shall enhance curiosity of my local, national and global readers to know more about many secrets which are still underneath Rocky Mountains of Cashmere.

This research book is not only meant for people of Jammu and Cashmere who are being told repeatedly about Valour of Rani ki Jansi, Razia Sultana, queens of western countries, Queen Saba or Bilqees of Arabia, Queen Hinda, Queen Catherene, Elizebeth, Anne Bolleyn, Hatshepsut, Maria, Neferthi, Cleopatra, Rani Laxmibhai, but no serious historian or scholar of Cashmere had bothered to highlight extraordinary acumen, valour, braveness and spiritual status of Sultana Kota Rani who sacrificed her life for Pride of Cashmere.

By speaking less for their own daughters of soil and crowning those who had no links or role in shaping glorious history of Cashmere speak in volumes how different faiths and different religious thoughts as a result of their quarrels and conflicts erased the names and rendered status of their own lightening stars of the history to oblivion.

The reality is that non unanimity of ideologies reduced magnificent Cashmere of Yore to severed Cashmere. However when you study it through open windows of love and mutual faith in galaxy of our historical stars you find Sultana Kota Rani is more significant among many who received Simultaneous esteem from Buddhists, Muslims and Hindu's equally.

The abstruse dynastic rule like Mihran kulla or Gulla, Sussala ,Chachalla, Queen Dida, Harsha and even Simha and Suha Devoe's may make emotions of my readers to erupt as sky touching tides inside their nerves. Their visions may shake and move like restless waves of yellow river passing in backyard of Shanzi where Nowha & Focusi shrines of Ren mountains. They may watch city same way as Shankrachariya would look from Takhat e Sulaimani mountain, Mahadeove or hari Chandan buddist summits of Harwan. They will find Sultana Kota Rani continued to make Cashmere spiritual landscape fertile for all intellectual ideologies and faiths.

The history describe each drop of Vitasta Jehlum painted black and red with ink of books and blood of humans by east Dalcha Zulqader khan when he arrived along 70 thousand cavalry of terror soldiers to loot treasure of Cashmere. However peer Panchal mountains and Ganjan valley turned as grave of piercing ice graves which not only tore their bodies in pieces but buried them for ever under tonnes and tonnes of snowy layers.

This Research book will definitely enlighten people all around globe about those chapters of historical facts of events, philosophies and spiritualties of Cashmere which so far remained hidden to them like forbidden fruits of heaven. Radicals disguised as true narrators proved proxies to erase all bright versions about Cashmere as it would diminish value of their bigotries. They never allowed to open lid of true ethos of Cashmere which always believed in synergy of faiths and religions. Whenever radicalism struck as terror in Cashmere in any form of any religion its end was fiasco.

The triumph of spirituality had always scripted doom for dynasties whose powers were unlimited, colossal and uncontrolled. Each elaboration of any fact of history extracted out of hundreds of books, hundreds of Taswuf and Reshi Streams, Sutra's, lahri Sundarya's, Reshi nama's, Folk lores ,spiritual practices and traditional myths has enabled to present such fact with power of imagination associated with such situation as per human behaviour at that period of time. The nature of histories available in Sharda paeths, Greek, Indian, Arabian, Persian, Khurassan and china references preponderantly helped to present on certain occasions picturesque situation of historical facts.

When I conducted research on Sultana Kota Rani I saw each imprint of her contribution in cashmere is still Vivid in each drop of Gupt [secret] Canal and kota kanal which still flow like holy Ganges merging in Vitasta Jehlum of knowledge. Her blue jewel handled dragger with which she martyred herself by protecting honour of Cashmere is still erupting from her Reshi peer abode and Inderkote, or near the shrine of her Murshid Bulbulshah and her husband Sultan Sader ud deen as sign of resistance against terror ideologies. Her spirit seem to be always available to banish radical religious bigots, tormentors of our civilization like dalcha and Achala and protect people of Cashmere from all evils. It was Sultana Kota Rani who saved pluralistic and human character of Cashmere.

My present research book through each word, each event and each historical fact has investigated the trauma of suppressed humanity in Cashmere caused by frequent terror attacks and conflicts. The reality of start of 14th century in Cashmere lies in the fact that historical Trio like Hazrat Bulbulshah, Tibet Prince Sultant Sader ud Deen Renchenshah and Sultana Kota Rani were assigned by divine forces divine task to save people of Cashmere and its existence. The nature also directly came to rescue to bury 70 thousand terror forces alive same way as Abrah forces were destroyed by Ababil's belonging to family of Bulbuls who protected holy kaba.

Khwaja Farooq Renzushah
Author

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1
CHAPTER

Background of Cashmere before Birth of Sultana Kota Rani in home of Prime Minister of Lohara dynasty.

This comprehensive research book on the most prominent queen of Kashmir, Sultana Kota Rani, whose entire life from birth to death revolved around the most significant period of history, shall enlighten students of Kashmiri civilization about this sacrificing and towering personality. The significant features of history and faiths revolving around this period actually shaped the composite culture of Kashmir, called Kashmiriyat, known around the globe.

These historical and spiritual facts of history, before and after her birth, are based on comparative records and circumstantial situations that occurred in Kashmir during this most crucial period. To understand Kashmir, we have to understand each phase through which Sultana Kota Rani passed since her birth and examine the administrative and spiritual class that controlled the entire political, administrative, and spiritual institutions spread around the huge territorial jurisdiction of Kashmir.

Sultana Kota Rani belonged to the last generation of the Lohara dynasty, which dominated Kashmir for three centuries. Its sway over surrounding regions in the northwestern part of the subcontinent for more than three centuries, between 1003 CE and approximately 1320 CE, remained remarkable. The world history is impressed by how Lalitaditya Muktapada, during the 8th century, swayed major portions of the subcontinent from the spiritual paradise of Kashmir.

Sultana Kota Rani was born in the first year of the 14th century, but her comprehensive study led her to make the administrative and spiritual caliber of Lalitaditya Muktapada her role model. *Rajatarangini*, translated by Sir Marc Aurel Stein, is not the only source to find out the dynasty chain of the Lohara family, whose chiefs originated from the

Khasa tribe. Even the Reshi connection of the Karkota as well as Lohara dynasties with the highest statured saints like Attri Gupta, Abhinavagupta, Miran Reshi, Zulka Reshi, and Ruma Reshi is not mentioned in *Rajatarangini*.

Kalhana, who has mentioned a lot about Shaivism in Kashmir, has omitted the name of Abhinavagupta, a Reshi saint of great secrecy in Kashmir. Even when Lalitaditya Muktapada, the great hero of Kashmir, brought Attri Gupta and built a historic spiritual house on the shores of the Vitasta, it is mentioned in ancient Sutras but not in the *Rajatarangini*.

The role of Adi Shankaracharya in promoting the Reshi culture in Kashmir by writing *Saundarya Lahari*, the first Reshi text in Kashmir, is mentioned in hundreds of Reshi reference books but not in some prominent historical chronicles. It was the great Sultana Kota Rani who was an admirer of Lalitaditya Muktapada. She followed his administrative as well as spiritual steps to protect the age-old Reshi culture in Kashmir.

Sultana Kota Rani played a vital role in enriching Reshiyat by persuading Hazrat Bulbul Shah to merge various Sufi orders taught to Kota Rani by Hazrat Bulbul Shah with the Reshi order in Kashmir. Sultana Kota Rani's references are mentioned in abundance, mostly related to Loharakot. The original seat of the Lohara dynasty was a hill fortress called Loharkot.

The name Loharkot is derived from the prime of the centuries-old dynasty, which existed in the Pir Panjal range of mountains on a trade route between western Punjab and Kashmir, known as Poonch. The Lohara dynasty made it the center of its activities in its earlier phase but later made Srinagar its prime capital.

Sultana Kota Rani had made Lalitaditya Muktapada of the 8th century her role model for Kashmiri civilization. Before the Mongol invasion, in her prime young age, Sultana Kota Rani tried to revive the glory of Lalitaditya Muktapada's era through her father, the Prime Minister of the Lohara dynasty, and Suha Deva, the Emperor of Kashmir, but both of them failed, resulting in a horrible disaster for Kashmir in the 14th century.

The events of such disasters are adequately described in this book based on deep research. After the Karkota dynasty, it was the Lohara dynasty that ruled for several centuries in Kashmir. The kingdom of Lohara was centered around a group of large villages collectively known as Lohrin. Simharaja was the King of Lohara, whose daughter was Rani Dida.

This was the period when Kshemgupta was the King of Kashmir. Since Dida was very beautiful, the King of Kashmir liked her and sought a proposal from her family, which was accordingly submitted. The Lohara King Simharaja promptly responded to the proposal with several horse-loads of gold and jewels. The proposal was instantly accepted.

Accordingly, Queen Didda, the wicked daughter of Simharaja, was married to Kshemgupta, the noble Reshi emperor of Kashmir. After the death of Kshemgupta in 958 CE, Didda assumed power as Regent Queen on behalf of her young son, Abhimanyu II.

Historical facts reveal Queen Didda developed a lust for power. Since she was only a Regent Queen and was supposed to pave the way for Abhimanyu II after he became capable of administering Kashmir independently, her cruelty and conspiracies led to the death of not only Abhimanyu in 972 CE but also her other sons, Nandigupta, Tribhuvanagupta, and Bhimagupta.

Four sons of Kshemgupta belonged to the Gupt Reshi chain in Kashmir. Gupt was a Sanskrit *Tariqat* of secrecy, which in China and Central Asian countries was known as *Tariqat-e-Khafiya* of meditation. As already mentioned, Attri Gupt was settled by Lalitaditya Muktapada in Kashmir on the shores of the Vitasta, where the Bhairove Temple, near the Bulbul Shah Shrine, exists today.

Queen Didda was cruel and sadistic and never belonged to any Reshi saintly order. Therefore, the King of Kashmir, Kshemgupta, was not happy with her after marriage. After the sudden death of Kshemgupta, Queen Didda was left with four minor sons. The eldest was Abhimanyu, followed by Nandigupta, Tribhuvanagupta, and Bhimagupta.

Queen Didda was apprehensive that, since the bloodline of her children was linked with Reshi orders connected with Attri Gupta and Abhinavagupta, they would dethrone her as she contained non-Kashmiri blood. She killed each of these grandchildren in turn and, after eliminating them, became the sole power in Kashmir. After her death, she had no direct descendant left except her nephew, known in history as Sangramraja. He is considered the strong pillar of the Lohara dynasty, taking over kingship after the sudden death of his aunt, Queen Didda, in 1003 CE.

* * *

2
CHAPTER

Mohamood Gaznavi's defeat in Tosamaidan during 11th century emboldened Sultana Kota Rani 's pride for Cashmere.

The history will never forget the bravery of Samgrāmarāja, who was able to repulse several attacks by Mahmood of Ghazni against Kashmir at Tosa Maidan. This was a time when Mahmood Ghaznavi had his eyes on the treasure of Kashmir, which belonged to the Lohara dynasty after the death of Queen Didda. He had attacked India through Gujarat 17 times and not only destroyed the Somnath Temple but also looted its treasures repeatedly.

Mahmood Ghaznavi's approach of launching wars and invasions against peaceful civilizations was driven by the Damascus-born offensive radical strategies of the 8th century. Mahmood Ghaznavi abandoned the *Taqlee* division of intellectual interactions with other societies and instead adopted a mechanism to create horror through the might of the sword. His invasions were mainly aimed at looting neighboring countries rather than conquering any territory. After taking full control of Afghanistan, he focused his eyes on India as well as Kashmir. His forces reached Tosa Maidan and advanced toward Sita Haran, where the holy spring of Goddess Sita flowed. However, the most brave Lohara King of Kashmir, Sangramraja, swung into action and forced him to flee from Sita Spring through Naqwair Paal and Noorpur Gali, exiting the Tosa Maidan side.

In a battle at Tosa Maidan, the nephew of Queen Didda, Sangramraja—whose veins carried the blood of Attri Gupta and Kshemgupta—defeated Mahmood Ghaznavi. Although his four cousins had been killed by Queen Didda, the Reshi blood that resisted terror with a brave spirit remained alive in Sangramraja. The seven-story watchtower, Damaam Sar (known as Damdam) in Tosa Maidan, bears witness to how Sangramraja inflicted a humiliating defeat on Mahmood Ghaznavi and his forces. Mahmood Ghaznavi realized that Kashmir could not be conquered and retreated to Lahore. Sangramraja not only defeated Mahmood Ghaznavi on Kashmiri soil near Damdam but also supported the Lahore ruler Trilochanapala due to his Reshi spiritual connection, ensuring readiness for any future attacks by Mahmood Ghaznavi.

Sangramraja had taken over the reins of the Kashmiri empire in 1003 CE after the death of his cruel and tyrant aunt, Queen Didda. He continued his Reshi ideology despite the fact that Queen Didda had slain several Reshi sages during her lifetime. Immediately after her marriage to Kshemgupta, she was told by a Tantrik that Reshies would be the cause of her downfall. She did not even spare her four sons, who had blood lineage with Abhinavagupta and Attri Gupta.

Sangramraja had no option but to continue with Tunga as his Prime Minister. Prime Minister Tunga had wielded much power during the reign of Queen Didda and continued to do so after her death. Sangramraja was afraid of him and allowed Tunga to have his way for many years. Tunga appointed many corrupt officials, who extracted significant amounts of wealth from the kingdom's subjects. These actions made Tunga increasingly unpopular, and his advanced age contributed to his inability to deal with challenges.

Sangramraja was a Reshi by faith. He would visit great Gupta saints in their caves as a mark of honor and sometimes joined them in their meditation practices. The majority of the population believed in mysticism and the Reshi cult. Unlike Queen Didda, who had evicted all Reshi saints from her court, Sangramraja was fond of Reshi tenets. He disliked Tunga for his harsh and cruel methods, which he had learned from Queen Didda.

There are reports that Queen Didda and her Prime Minister Tunga were involved in Tantric practices together. Tunga played a vital role in the killing of Queen Didda's sons and grandsons to ensure she remained Regent Queen. Due to Tunga's negative role in a war against Mahmood Ghaznavi, Sangramraja declared him a traitor of Kashmir and ordered his execution. The people of Kashmir lauded Sangramraja's decision to hang Prime Minister Tunga, who was extremely hated by the populace. This act further increased Sangramraja's popularity.

Sangramraja had two sons, Harirāja and Ananta. After Sangramraja's death, Harirāja, being the elder son, succeeded him as king. However, he mysteriously lived as king for only 22 days. The role of conspirators and followers of Tunga in his sudden death or poisoning cannot be ruled out.

The mysterious death of Sangramraja, followed by the death of his successor King Harirāja within 22 days, shocked all of Kashmir. Harirāja was succeeded by another son, Ananta. It is speculated in various references that Harirāja was also killed by his mother, Shrilakhā, who may have desired to hold power herself following Didda's doctrines. However, her plans were thwarted by those protecting her children. Vigraharāja, an enemy of Kashmir and a sympathizer of Shrilakhā, attempted to take control of Kashmir but was defeated and killed in Srinagar by the loyal forces of Sangramraja and his sons.

The economic strategy of King Ananta failed. He was characterized by commentators as a weak economist who accumulated massive debt rather than utilizing Kashmir's treasure from Queen Didda. His wife, Sryamat, disliked his handling of the economy. She managed to settle the debts incurred by her husband using her own resources. In 1063, she forced Ananta to abdicate in favor of their son, Kalaśa, to preserve the dynasty. However, this strategy proved unsuccessful due to Kalaśa's own unsuitability. Kalaśa ruled until 1089, but Sryamat regretted her decision to sideline Ananta and install Kalaśa as king. Kalaśa engaged in an incestuous relationship with his daughter.

King Kalaśa spent little time on matters of governance. He freed himself from his father's influence in 1076, causing Ananta to leave the capital with loyal courtiers. Kalaśa then laid siege to their new abode at Vijayesvara. Ananta committed suicide in 1081. Kalaśa's son, Harsha, felt that the allowance granted by his father was insufficient for his extravagant tastes. Harsha attempted to kill Kalaśa but failed, resulting in Kalaśa imprisoning him. Utkarsa, who was already ruler of Lohara, was nominated by Kalaśa as his heir apparent. Dr. Aurel Stein, in his translation of *Rajatarangini*, states that just as Kalaśa forced Ananta to commit suicide, Kalaśa himself died in 1089.

Harsha became king in 1089 when he was freed from prison by his well-wishers. He banished Utkarsa, imprisoning him in the same underground cave where he had been held by Kalaśa. Historical accounts suggest that Utkarsa died of starvation in the cave prison.

Harsha waged a communal war against the dominant Buddhist class in Kashmir. For his greed, he melted golden statues of Gautama Buddha into coins for his treasury. Although the kingdom's economic fortunes initially improved, as evidenced by the issuance of gold and silver coinage, the situation soon deteriorated. Even night soil was taxed, and temples were looted to fund his failed military ventures and indulgent lifestyle. Only two statues of Buddha survived his reign. In 1099, the kingdom was ravaged by plague, flood, famine, and widespread lawlessness. Harsha conducted campaigns in the eastern valley to wrest control of land from feudatory landlords (dāmaras), who ultimately murdered him in 1101.

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3
CHAPTER

Twin brother Uchachala and Sussala's infighting created confusion and Anarchy among Loharian and Cashmere Ranks.

Sultana Kota Rani was a Reshi; therefore, she never liked the communal approach of her predecessors. As already pointed out, her role model was Lalitaditya Muktapada of the 8th century, who merged spirituality and administrative systems by carrying with him both Buddhist and Hindu opinion-makers. Harsha's atrocities against Buddhists were shameful and unaccountable to the ancestral Reshi culture of Kashmir. After the murder of Harsha by Loharian Damaras, it became clear that it was Uchachala who controlled the Loharian society. Uchachala and his younger brother, Sussala, had been spotted in Kashmir by Harsha as pretenders to his crown during the unrest. They were descendants of Sangramaraja. In 1100 A.D., they were forced to flee. Both brothers found the Loharian territory, surrounded by Damaras, a safe haven for them. They utilized their exile from Kashmir as descendants of Reshi Sangramaraja. The Damaras were believers in mysticism and Reshi Gupt (secret) meditations; therefore, Lohara became a strong political capital for the twin brothers.

The exile move from Kashmir to the land of the Damaras elevated the status of Uchachala and Sussala. It did them no harm, as it increased their human followings among the Damaras. History calls it the inefficiency of Harsha to order the exile of Uchachala and Sussala from Kashmir to the vibrant neighboring cluster of Damaras. He could have easily eliminated both powerful entities of the time in Kashmir, and both brothers would have been dead, as Didda killed her own sons and grandsons.

The exile gave spiritual and political reasons to the Damaras to rally around them. As a consequence of this, Uchachala was able to mount armed attacks on Harsha in 1101 A.D., which, although initially unsuccessful, eventually achieved its aim as those closest to Harsha deserted him for spiritual reasons. The spiritual relationship of Uchachala and Sussala helped integrate the territories and societies of Kashmir and Lohara.

The two kingdoms of Kashmir and Lohara, the land of the Damaras, were joined by strengthening cultural and political knots. Uchachala headed Lohara, while Sussala headed Kashmir. The cruel and conflicting period of Harsha was over. A cordial relationship existed for several years, but after some time, due to territorial and administrative conflicts, the unity split.

The rule of Uchachala was largely a victim of inherited circumstances, particularly the power of the Damaras, which had caused Harsha's downfall. While this was a strength for him, he was unable to stabilize the penurious Loharian society, either economically or in terms of authority. This was not due to a lack of capability on his part, and he did succeed in forming an alliance with the most powerful Damara personality, namely Gargacandra.

Sussala forgot his relationship with Uchachala and continuously endeavored to bring Lohara under the control of Kashmir by force. The downfall of Uchachala came in December 1111 as a result of a conspiracy by the Loharians. Uchachala was murdered. Radda was one of the leaders of the conspiracy against him. However, Radda's rule as the Loharian king lasted only one day and one night. Gargacandra organized the defeat of the conspirator Radda and beheaded him while he was seated on the Loharian throne.

The tribe of Gargacandra supported Salhana as the new Loharian leader and crowned him king after the murders of Uchachala and Radda. The conspirator Radda was identified as working on behalf of Sussala, and Gargacandra carried the severed head of Radda on the tip of a sword all around the streets of Lohara.

Gargacandra proved himself to be a cunning and opportunistic leader. He arranged the marriage of two of his daughters—one to Sussala and one to Sussala's son, Jayasimha—but he could not save his own life from the revenge of the Damaras, who brutally killed him. The Damaras found a potential candidate for the throne in Bhiksacara, a grandson of Harsha, and managed to install him briefly in 1120 when their numbers had swollen sufficiently to resist and oppose Kashmir's king, Sussala.

Harsha's dynastic line through Bhiksacara, brought by the Damaras to an end, did not last long. Sussala was furious at the rebellion of the Damaras, the killing of his family relation Gargacandra, and the suppression of the Gargacandra tribe. He, therefore, decided to invade Lohara. Before Sussala, with a huge Kashmiri army, left Srinagar to take over Lohara in early 1121 A.D., the Damaras extended their support back to Sussala, which helped him take over Loharian territory without any resistance.

Sussala also imprisoned troublesome members of his own family, against whom he received reports of conspiracy. He was unable to control the lawlessness among the feudatory chiefs. The Damaras had actually supported him only to regain the throne but exploited the confusion and anarchy for their tribal supremacy.

Disgusted with the state of affairs and failing to restore peace in Lohara, Sussala, in 1123, during a period of intense pressure from besieging Damaras and while mourning the death of one of his wives, decided to abdicate Lohara in favor of his son, Jayasimha. This deceptive plot to assert authority indirectly over Lohara from Kashmir backfired on Sussala and caused his death.

After the death of King Sussala, his son Jayasimha formally took over the affairs of the Kashmir Kingdom. Jayasimha revived the Reshi culture and his dynasty's faith in Reshi mysticism. This helped King Jayasimha establish cordial relations with the people. He also succeeded in bringing peace and a degree of economic well-being during his reign, until 1155 A.D.

Bhiksacara was not silent. He continued to mount further attempts to regain the throne during the first two years. Before he could succeed in taking over the throne in 1155 A.D., he was killed. Accordingly, his son Paramanuka and then his grandson Vantideva ruled from 1165–1172. Vantideva was replaced by a new ruler named Vuppadeva, who was elected and supported by the people. Vuppadeva was succeeded in 1181 A.D. by his brother Jassaka. After the death of Jassaka, Jagadeva ruled in 1199 A.D.

Jagadeva faced a turbulent time when he was forced out of his own kingdom by his officials. His death by poison came in 1213, but his son, Rajadeva, survived until 1235. Samgramadeva ruled from 1235 to 1252. He too faced turbulent periods, as he was exiled and killed in 1252 upon his return.

Another son of Rajadeva became king in 1252. Ramadeva, who had no children, appointed Laksmandadeva as his heir. Although Ramadeva's reign was calm, Laksmandadeva's reign, which began in 1273, saw deterioration. In 1286, Laksmandadeva's son, Simhadeva, ascended the throne during a precarious phase for the kingdom.

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4
CHAPTER

Ramachandra's ambivalent role during Simhadevoe's and Suh devoe's periods was opposed by daughter of Cashmere Sultana Kota Rani.

Sultana Kota Rani was born in 1300 A.D., during the time when Laksmandadeva was the ailing king, and her father had assumed strong administrative powers in the Cashmere-based Lohara Dynasty. The unity of Lohara and the Deva rulers re-emerged during Laksmandadeva's time. After his death, his son Simhadeva took over the reins of Cashmere.

As a result of the nefarious designs of conspirators who created a rift between the two brothers, Uchachala and Sussala, over Lohara and Cashmere, this regional conflict continued between the two societies. A new group of conspirators also created conflict between Simhadeva and the Reshi intellectuals of Cashmere. Simhadeva survived until 1301. He was largely an ineffective ruler dominated by his foolish, illiterate advisers. He was killed by a man whom he had publicly abused.

The last of the dynasty was Sūhadeva, who was discovered by Prime Minister Rama Chandra after Simhadeva's demise. Rama Chandra introduced Sūhadeva, a 13-year-old boy, as the real son of Simhadeva, who had been placed in his ashram for education. However, various references about him are conflicting. Some describe Sūhadeva as a lost younger brother of Simhadeva who appeared when Simhadeva died childless, while most sources refer to Sūhadeva as Simhadeva's lost son, mysteriously and suspiciously discovered by the Prime Minister immediately after his father's death.

Laksmandadeva was a strong ruler but an unpopular one. He taxed heavily, exempting not even the Brahmins from taxation. Although he managed to unite the kingdom of Cashmere under his control, the majority of the kingdom was united against him.

The initiative taken by Laksmandadeva and Simhadeva to include the majority of the Damara population in the top-level administrative system yielded great dividends in terms of peace and tranquility. Social conflicts between various factions and tribal lords were largely reduced. Laksmandadeva made the Brahmins understand that their survival depended on the support of the Damaras and that previous kings had succeeded only when the population supported them.

The Reshi cult, which believed in Kashab Reshi as the supreme spiritual personality in Cashmere and the Lohara region, was institutionalized under sovereign patronage. Reshis such as Atri Gupta, Abhinav Gupta, Keshmgupta, Sussala, Vupa Reshi, Zulka Reshi, Ruma Reshi, Miran Reshi, Gupa Reshi, Rama Reshi, Chandra (Crescent) Reshi, Tarak Reshi, Gash Reshi, Booni Reshi, Aftab Reshi, Ibrahim Reshi, Gupha Reshi, Darya Reshi, Sheen Reshi, Rood Reshi, Abur Reshi, Taapa Reshi, Bonul Reshi, Wawa Reshi, and Gata Reshi, associated with planetary systems, weather orientation, faith connectivity, and their abodes, remained very popular as spiritual and, for some, exclusively political entities of Cashmere.

The Brahmins established cordial and intimate relations with the Reshis of Cashmere. Laksmandadeva and his son Simhadeva would frequently visit the spiritual abodes of these powerful Reshis. They would seek guidance regarding administrative matters from them, as Reshis were in constant touch with the majority of the people visiting their caves and abodes day and night.

The folk stories of Cashmere, scripted in ancient times, are full of praises for the Reshis of the past, who were believed to have direct spiritual connectivity with Kashab Reshi. This not only instilled a sense of Cashmiriyat in their people but also strengthened the element of faith, as Kashab Reshi was believed to have defended Cashmere by fighting against the evil symbolized by Jhalavbadev, whom he eliminated with divine blessings.

This faith was unique in Cashmere among the Reshis, who were environmentally oriented in their thoughts. They meditated on mountain summits, riverbanks, water bodies, and inside caves, known as *guphas*.

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5
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani was groomed in lap of Reshyat in Cashmere.

Sultana Kota Rani was not only blessed with extraordinary beauty, but she also acquired deep knowledge of comparative religious thoughts through Reshi saints from a very young age. As already pointed out in earlier chapters, indigenous Reshiyat remained predominant in Cashmere since its origin, where Kashab Reshi emerged as the true savior of Cashmere. King Keshnandadeva was impressed with the Reshi cult; however, his son Simha Deva and grandson Suha Deva, rather than understanding its importance, devoted their lives to accumulating treasures and gold. Simha Deva died without having any children, but Ramachandra presented a 13-year-old boy, Suha Deva, groomed by him, as the real son of Simha Deva.

The Reshi saints and Shankaracharya Math, believing Ramachandra's oath, installed Suha Deva as king of Cashmere. Ramachandra became his Prime Minister but was the de facto ruler of Cashmere. Ramachandra was apprehensive of the Reshi Math and avoided establishing cordial relations with the dominant Reshi class of Cashmere society.

Sultana Kota Rani was influenced by the *Ren* vision of unity propounded by Confucius in China and the Cashmere belt. Cashmere history and Buddhist Sutras are full of references to hundreds of scholars who made Reshi ideology an ideal ideology of human love, symbolized in the *Ren* vision of Confucius. These facts are evident in the developments Sultana Kota Rani faced later in her life.

Sultana Kota Rani confronted her father, Ramachandra, and Suha Deva on various complex issues, particularly their lack of seriousness about public affairs and their negative approach toward local saints and

Reshis. Simha Deva and Suha Deva were more keen on accumulating assets and treasures. Suha Deva followed the administrative approach of Harsha, which was strongly opposed by the Reshi class of the valley. Suha Deva even placed golden statues of gods and goddesses in trunks as part of his personal treasury.

King Suha Deva and his Prime Minister Ramachandra did not take the fast-changing developments of neighboring Central Asia seriously. After the rise of Genghis Khan, Hulegu Khan, the chief of the terror hordes, was eyeing Cashmere with malicious intent, and their descendants, like Zulqader Khan, later fulfilled their dreams. Rather than taking proactive measures to prepare for such challenges, King Suha Deva and his Prime Minister Ramachandra were preoccupied with collecting taxes and enriching the treasury.

The two parallel approaches adopted by King Suha Deva and Prime Minister Ramachandra brought Cashmere to the brink of confusion and contradiction. The strategic suggestions frequently given by Sultana Kota Rani and her brother, Rawan Chandra, were always ignored, causing havoc in Cashmere's social spectrum. The King and Prime Minister relied on the natural defenses of the huge mountains and the inclement weather surrounding the paradise valley of Cashmere, believing it would make any enemy invasion impossible. However, Sultana Kota Rani and Rawan Chandra, being true friends of Cashmere, were not satisfied with the way the King and Prime Minister were administering the kingdom.

Under the guidance of saints, Sultana Kota Rani had gained an understanding of Cashmere's intellectual background. Ibrahim Reshi was her intimate guide who imparted *gyaan* (knowledge) to her. One prominent scholar, Pāṇini, referred to the people of Cashmere as *Cashmirikas*. Early references to Cashmere can also be found in the *Mahabharata* (Sabha Parva). The term "Cashmira" is mentioned in a mantra worshipping Sharada Devi, referring to the land of Cashmira, which is likely the Sharada Peeth.

Cashmere derives its name from Kashyapa Rishi. According to Christopher Snedden, the name "Cashmere" could be a shortened form of "Kashyapa Mira" or "the lake of Sage Kashyapa." Alternatively, it may come from the Cashmiri or Sanskrit term meaning "to dry up water." English translations of ancient Sutras and Vedas of Cashmere have evolved, and in modern dictionaries and encyclopedias, the region is scripted as both "Cashmere" and "Kashmir."

Sultana Kota Rani had extensive knowledge of Shankaracharya's *Saundarya Lahari*, the Gupt Reshi *gyaan* at Vitasta, and the Gupt Ganga of Attri Gupt. She had studied the *Nilamata Purana*, an ancient treatise on the geography, culture, and history of Cashmere. Regardless of its historicity, the *Nilamata Purana* is indispensable for references to Cashmere, including war etiquette, the crowning of a pregnant queen, geographical details like Gandhara (present-day Afghanistan), and Cashmere's natural beauty.

Sultana Kota Rani and her brother represented religious pluralism, deeply rooted in the history of the Cashmere Valley, where Buddhism, Hinduism, and Cashmere Shaivism flourished simultaneously. Unsurprisingly, communal peace and equality have incessantly thrived in the region. The coexistence between communities in Cashmere has generally remained harmonious despite the various dynasties that ruled over it for centuries.

Sultana Kota Rani grasped the significance of the religious plurality of her valley before the advent of Islam, introduced in Cashmere by Hazrat Bulbul Shah. She was aware that the Cashmere region was conquered by Ashoka, who subsequently sent missionaries to introduce Buddhism to the land. Buddhism was a significant part of classical Cashmere's ancient culture. It became the center of Sanskrit Buddhism when the Mahayana, Yogachara, and Vajrayana schools of Buddhism developed and flourished. By the end of the first millennium, Cashmiri teachers, monks, and scholars had migrated throughout Asia, including China, Tibet, Afghanistan, Japan, and Korea, spreading the *dharma*, translating texts, and interpreting doctrines.

It can be comfortably stated that the existence of Buddhism in Cashmere was instrumental in establishing Buddhist and Hindu spiritual fraternities in Central Asia. Interestingly, prior to and during

Kalhana's time, no evident distinction was made between Hindus and Buddhists in the Cashmere Valley.

Cashmere Shaivism, introduced in the 8th century, gained momentum during the 10th and 11th centuries. This period was marked by a spirit of religious activity and idealistic monism known as Trika. During this time, it reached its highest development and produced teachers and writers of high caliber.

Cashmere reached the zenith of its glory during the early medieval period (1003–1171 A.D.), dominated by the Lohara dynasties. The Lohara Dynasty was founded in 1003 A.D. by Sangramaraja, from the Khasa tribe, who received the crown of Cashmere from his aunt, Queen Didda. This reign is generally regarded as a period of shameless lust and pitiless misrule by kings and queens. Especially, the later rulers of the dynasty were considered weak, inefficient, and controlled by corrupt conspirators.

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6
CHAPTER

Understanding Sultan Kota Rani's Cashmere through comparative research of literary, historical and religious texts

When serious, comprehensive, and deep research is conducted on the Reshi Queen of Cashmir, Sultana Kota Rani, her personality and ideology must be assessed through various comparative sources. The impact of Cashmir's literature, religious philosophy, pluralism, and worldviews present Sultana Kota Rani as a shining star of pluralism.

Cashmir, in ancient texts of Greece linked to the expedition of Alexander, is described as the land called "Cashperia," possibly a short form of "Cashyapamira." Sultana Kota Rani, the most learned personality of her time, taught by Reshi saints like Ibrahim Reshi and inspired by Attri Gupta, *Sundariya Lahri* of Shankaracharya, Abhinav Gupta, and Miran Reshi, had understood the importance of her land from the texts of the Alexandrian era.

The most prominent historian and scholar Ptolemy described Cashmir as situated "below the sources of the Bidaspes (Vitasta), the Sandabal (Chandrabhaga), and the Adris (Iravati)." This suggests that Damaras and Nagas referred to modern Jhelum as Bidaspes, which, during the Karakota and Lohara dynasties, became known as Vitasta, as scripted by Kalhana in *Rajatarangini.* Hazrat Bulbulshah and Shah Hamdan later referred to it in Persian as Jhelum, where "Jah" means glorious and "Lum" means flowing. This "flowing glory" was accepted by all religious civilizations of Cashmir.

Greek research books highlight the importance of Cashmir, gifted with abundant water resources. Earlier civilizations flourished due to its rivers, as most mythologies trace their origins to water sources. The

Reshi mythology of Cashmir, which Sultana Kota Rani also embraced, was deeply rooted in the Cashmir environment.

Sultana Kota Rani studied and understood that "Caspapyros," referred to in Greek geographer Hekataois' text, and "Ċaspatyros," as mentioned by Herodotus, were linked to Cashmir. Herodotus states that Skylax, the Karyandian, began in Caspatyros while tracing the Indus River's path from the mountains to the sea.

Records suggest that Caspatyros may be the same as Cashyapa-pura (city of Cashyapa) mentioned in other texts. While North Indian Hindu scripts do not prominently link Cashyapa with Cashmir, Greek texts do. This contributed to Sultana Kota Rani's conflict with her father Ramchandra and King Suha Deva.

Sultana Kota Rani identified Cashmir's Reshi culture with the soil of Cashmir, where supreme status was given to Cashyapa Reshi, revered for saving Cashmir.

Since China's civilization was in proximity to Cashmir, Confucius' Ren philosophy, emphasizing human supremacy alongside the divine, was also prevalent in Cashmir. The *Nilamata Purana* equates Cashyapa Reshi, the first Reshi saint of Cashmir, with divinity, stating that after eradicating water-borne evils, the human race emerged in Cashmir. Reshiyat doctrines emphasized unity among humans against unnatural evils.

China was under the intellectual influence of Cashmir. In the 6th century, Hsuan-Tsang stated that the world's best education existed in Cashmir, then a mountainous part of China. Hsuan-Tsang arrived in Cashmir before the era of Lalitaditya Muktapada of the Karakota dynasty. This was the period when the great Prophet of Islam advised Arabs to seek knowledge in China—a reference likely pointing to Cashmir.

Murasala Pandit mentions the Prophet of Islam wrote letters to various kings worldwide, including the King of Cashmir. This letter may have existed in royal libraries up to the 14th century during the Karakota and Lohara dynasties.

Chinese chronicles from 541 CE describe Cashmir as “enveloped on all sides like a precious jewel by snowy mountains, with a valley in the south that serves as the kingdom’s gate.”

The greatest Chinese authority on Cashmir is Hsuan-Tsang, who visited in 631 CE and spent two years studying the Sutras and Shastras. His itinerary contains a detailed description of Cashmir.

Hsuan-Tsang entered Cashmir through Baramulla, learning Buddhism in Baramulla and Srinagar. This was before Buddhism from Cashmir reached Tibet and parts of Shanxi, China. He stayed in Yarkand Saraie on the banks of Vitasta (Jhelum) near present-day Safa Kadal. Centuries later, during the reign of Suha Deva and Ramchandra, this site became a treasury for precious treasures.

Sultana Kota Rani is universally referred to as a warrior, brave administrator, and icon of knowledge. Similarly, Cashmir is called the "shrine of knowledge" due to the ancient Sharada Peeth (6th–12th century CE), a ruined learning center in present-day Pakistan-Occupied Cashmir. Sharada Peeth, linked to Sharada Devi, was believed to be the abode of Devi Shandilya. It was a significant cultural site emphasizing knowledge and education in Cashmir.

Sultana Kota Rani was deeply influenced by Sharada Peeth and spent considerable time there, studying ancient Sutras and reading sacred texts preserved in the royal libraries.

Sharada Peeth is one of the three holiest sites in Cashmir alongside the Martand Sun Temple and Mahadeo summits. The Shiva Lingam of Amarnath was rediscovered by the Malik family in 1858 CE, gaining significance thereafter.

During Sultana Kota Rani’s era, Mahadeo Mountain featured a Shiva statue from the Karakota dynasty. One summit housed Sufi Reshi saints at Aasthan Marag of Mahadeo. Post-15th century, new shrines like Kheer Bhawani, Hari Parbat, and Takht-e-Sulaiman (Shankaracharya) gained prominence, reflecting the religious and cultural synthesis in Cashmir.

Sultana Kota Rani admired the Reshi saint of Beerwah, known for Abhinav Gupta’s philosophy of human love. She was influenced by

Attri Gupta, meditating along Vitasta at Bharoe Temple and Gupt Ganga in Harwan.

As outlined in the first chapter, Sultana Kota Rani was inspired by Attri Gupta and Lalta Datiya Muktapada, who built a house on Vitasta's banks near Bharoe Temple. This temple now exists near Bulbulshah's and Sultan Sader-ud-Din Rinchenshah's shrines.

Today, a Bharoe Temple is also located in Nawah Kadal. Attri Gupta's descendants, including Abhinav Gupta, played significant roles in the intellectual and spiritual heritage of Cashmir.

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7
CHAPTER

Reshi Gupt [secret] Saga's, Seer's, mystic's influence on Sultana Kota Rani

Cashmere during the Lohara dynasty remained under the spiritual influence of the most outstanding Acharyas of the Shaiva philosophy. In **Tantraloka** and **Paratrimshika Vivarana Sutras,** some Kashmiri noble saints are described. Vasugupta was a mystic Kashmiri Reshi scholar at the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th centuries CE. He was the son of Attri Gupta.

In Kashmiri, "Gupt" was a Sanskrit word for secrecy. Even in Cashmere, the Ganga flowed secretly and was called **Gupt Ganga** on Ishber Hills, where Attri Gupta also meditated on the shores of the Vitasta. This "Gupt" title, since Attri Gupta—the spiritual guide of Lalitaditya Muktapada—was mostly used for Reshi saints who spent their time meditating inside secret caves, on the shores of the Vitasta, or near springs (Nagas).

Attri Gupta was brought along by Lalitaditya Muktapada after conquering Sindh and Punjab. He taught Lalitaditya Muktapada the power of spirituality and blessed him to be triumphant. Lalitaditya built a spacious house for Attri Gupta on the orders of the king on the banks of the Jhelum (Vitasta). This house was later converted into the **Bheroe Temple.**

The present Hazrat Bulbulshah's Khankah exists just a few yards away from the same Attri Gupta Temple of the 8th century. Even the Gupt Ganga flowed from the Buddhist Hills of Hari Chandran to feed water to Cashmere during Attri Gupta's time. On Attri Gupta's advice, the seat of Reshiyat at Shankrachariya on Takht-e-Sulaiman was established as a temple for learning **Lahari Sundriya Reshi Naama** of Shankrachariya.

Sultana Kota Rani was a keen researcher at Sharda Peeth and a devotee of Shankrachariya and his Reshi chronicle, **Lahari Sundriya**. Through such precious material, she discovered that Shankrachariya had made his abode on the centuries-old Takht-e-Sulaiman. This spiritual abode became an epitome of spirituality.

An inscribed tile, part of a chain and series of tiles from Harwan, was found on Takht-e-Sulaiman inside the shrine, indicating that this seat of knowledge was visited by **Youzu**. The same name, **Youzu**, was inscribed on the ancient tile found at Takht-e-Sulaiman. It is also displayed in the **Rozabal Sufi Shrine** of Naseer Sahib of the Shadiliya Silsilah of Morocco and Andalusia, which mentions a Christian-style "second mystery grave."

Post-World War II references suggest that a person named Youzu had visited Takht-e-Sulaiman as well as the cave of Ashi Muqam in Pahalgam. The Qadiani cult believes that Eisa (Jesus Christ) was buried in Cashmere at Rozabal and visited various places. However, the idea of Eisa's grave in Cashmere is debatable, and serious research completely rules out its existence.

On the advice of Attri Gupta, Lalitaditya Muktapada revived the summit of Takht-e-Sulaiman as a temple of learning, where **Lahari Sundriya** of Shankrachariya's Reshi Naama was taught. Hari Chandran Mountain at Harwan was gifted with the secret Ganga through the mystical miracles of Attri Gupta during the time of Lalitaditya Muktapada.

After Attri Gupta's and Lalitaditya's period, Abhinav Gupta carried forward the doctrines of **Lahari Sundriya**. Abhinav Gupta's Shaivism was based on abstract visions of Shiva's powers, which were described by Shankrachariya in **Lahari Sundriya**.

The doctrines of human love propagated by Abhinav Gupta were similar to the Sufi literature of Khurasan, Baghdad, and Persia. Sultana Kota Rani spent most of her time, besides at Sharda Peeth, on the summits of Takht-e-Sulaiman studying the scriptures. She also visited the cave of Abhinav Gupta, where the saint, along with 1,200 companions, disappeared and never returned.

Sultana Kota Rani admired Lalitaditya Muktapada and became aware through her studies of how Genghis Khan and Hulagu Khan from their neighboring vicinity of China wreaked havoc all around the world. In her adolescence, she believed that only Lalitaditya Muktapada could return and bring all 1,200 Reshi saints out of the Beerwah cave. She was confident and hopeful that only the Reshi orders would be able to defeat the rising forces of Genghis Khan and Hulagu Khan.

In the high personality of Tibetan Prince Renchan Shah Gyelson, she saw the image of Lalitaditya Muktapada reappearing at the Khunjerab Pass when she met the prince of Tibet.

Through her research, Sultana Kota Rani learned about the recent developments around Cashmere and found that Hulagu Khan had rendered the city of knowledge, Baghdad, into ashes and brutally killed the last Abbasid king of Baghdad, Al-Musta'sim, by rolling a road roller over his body.

Sultana Kota Rani raised an alert within her kingdom and tried to persuade her father, Prime Minister Ramchandra, and the King of Cashmere, Suha Deva, to prepare against such terror attacks. However, they ignored her warnings. They developed a cowardly thought that the sky-touching mountains surrounding Cashmere, along with its weather conditions, which never allowed any force to intrude inside, were natural guardians that would protect them.

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8
CHAPTER

Influence of Lalitaditya Muktapada's victories on Sultana Kota Rani's ideology

Sultana Kota Rani was against the terrorism of Mongols and, at the same time, had a deep inclination towards Reshi literature on human integration. She studied that attempts to conquer Kashmir were made by the Arabs during the Banu Umayyah period when Hajjaj, the Arab Governor of Baghdad, deputed an Arab force to neighboring India. The Banu Umayyah forces established themselves in Sindh (711–713 CE) under Muhammad bin Qasim. However, Muhammad bin Qasim was recalled by the Umayyad Caliph to Damascus due to a dispute over sharing two princesses of Raja Dahir Singh of Sindh, captured in war by Muhammad bin Qasim as booty. He was placed in a camel skin bag and died of suffocation while being taken back to Baghdad to appear before Hajjaj, the Banu Umayyah Governor.

Sultana Kota Rani, through such study, assessed that the deportation of Muhammad bin Qasim averted a possible invasion of Kashmir. During the reign of Caliph Hisham (724–743 CE), the Arabs again marched towards Kashmir under the command of the ambitious governor Junaid. However, Lalitaditya Muktapida, the Karakota ruler of Kashmir, defeated Junaid and overran his kingdom.

A last attempt at the invasion of Kashmir was made by Hisham ibn Amr al-Taghlibi, the Governor of Sindh, appointed by the Caliph of Baghdad. Though he reached as far as the southern slopes of the Himalayas, which were a part of the Kashmiri kingdom, he failed to enter and occupy the valley. The decisive defeat of such invasions ensured that the Arabs never repeated such attempts. Lalitaditya Muktapida did not wait for the Arabian invasion inside the valley but instead crushed the Banu Umayyah forces in Sindh commanded by Junaid, who was planning to invade Kashmir.

Sultana Kota Rani tried to convince King Suha Deva and her father that the brave strategy undertaken by Lalitaditya Muktapida to proceed beyond the mountains and inflict exemplary defeat on Mongol terrorists should be followed regarding Mongol terror. However, her father, Ramchandra, and King Suha Deva never desired to risk the huge treasures accumulated by them in Yarqand Sarai by inviting war against the Mongols.

Sultana Kota Rani, as a true daughter of Kashmir, had a patriotic perception that was correct. Had her father, Prime Minister Ramchandra, and King Suha Deva given serious heed to her sagacious advice—based on thorough research at Sharda Peeth—the history of Kashmir would have been more glorious than during the time of Lalitaditya Muktapida. Kashmir at that time was competent and capable of destroying the infrastructure of its enemies, as was done to Junaid's army in Sindh. If the treasure of Kashmir, which existed in tons at Yarqand Sarai, had been utilized to revive a powerful army comparable to Lalitaditya Muktapida's era, Mongol power could have been destroyed in their own land, Mongolistan, by Kashmiri forces.

Sultana Kota Rani always appreciated how Lalitaditya Muktapida deterred Arab commanders, ensuring they did not dare to invade Kashmir for three hundred years. She was also proud of her own Lohara dynasty, which established its mark of bravery against another powerful commander in Tosamaidan.

The Sharda Peeth library records described how, after the Arabs, the rise of the Ghaznavids in the border area of Afghanistan threatened Kashmir. Prominent terror states like Swat, Kandahar, Balochistan, and Afghanistan on the borders of Kashmir came under the sway of Mahmud of Ghazni.

Mahmud's mindset was to loot treasures and riches from neighboring countries under the guise of religious conquest. In his own Kabul, he never touched Buddhist or Shiva statues but invaded Gujarat, India, 17 times to dismantle the Somnath Temple, driven by the huge treasures available in Indian temples. Following the Banu Umayyah's radical line, he decided to invade and conquer Kashmir—not only to loot its treasures but also to demolish its spiritual temples and monasteries.

Mahmud of Ghazni defeated Raja Jaipal (1002 CE), the ruler of Waihand Sindh (near Peshawar in modern-day Pakistan). Anandpal, the son and successor of Jaipal, also suffered a crushing defeat at Mahmud's hands in 1009 CE and died a few years later. Anandpal's son, Trilochanpala, whose influence was now confined to the Salt Range, appealed to Sangramaraja (1003–1028 CE), the king of Kashmir, for help against Mahmud of Ghazni. A small army contingent was sent by Sangramaraja, which joined Trilochanpala's forces. However, their combined forces were defeated by Mahmud, encouraging his greed to target Kashmir as per his strategy of invade, loot, and retreat.

Tosamaidan, the gateway to Kashmir and the terminating end point of the famous Silk Route, became a battleground. Mahmud advanced towards Kashmir and tried to enter via Tosamaidan Pass. His progress was checked by the strong Loharkot Fort, which was part of Kashmir, and he besieged it for a month. However, heavy snowfall cut off Mahmud's communications, compelling him to retreat. He made another attempt to invade Kashmir in September–October 1021 CE, but this time, bad weather combined with Sangramaraja's leadership and the warriors of Kashmir inflicted a humiliating defeat on Mahmud at Damam Sar near Tosamaidan.

Ramchandra, Sultana Kota Rani's father, argued that the hills, mountain ranges, Karakoram, and Pamir ranges, along with the spiritual significance of Tosamaidan, were the true saviors of Kashmir. The famous Sita Spring, where Ravana attempted to kidnap Goddess Sita, still flows a few yards away from the Bulbul Shah Pal rock abode and Sheikh-ul-Alam shrine. People believe Ravana escaped from the Sita Spring site where his iron earring got stuck at Nakwaier Pal near Noor Pur Gali and Damam Sar. At the same place, Sangramaraja's forces made Mahmud of Ghazni retreat.

This over-reliance on natural mountainous barriers without deploying warriors like Sangramaraja proved disastrous during the Mongol invasion. The confidence that lofty mountains would automatically stop the Mongols led to a lack of preparedness, leaving Kashmir vulnerable to Mongol terror.

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9

CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's esteem for sacred and spiritual ancient sites of Cashmere

Sultana Kota Rani herself belonged to the set of such administrative legends who acknowledged the remarkable achievements of Lalitaditya Muktapida, the great emperor of the 8th century of the Karakota Naga dynasty of Cashmere. His empire extended from Cashmere to Central Asia, from Uzbekistan to the Sundarbans. He ruled for 37 years, from 724 to 761 CE.

The renowned historian R.C. Majumdar's treatise, *Ancient India*, described his rule as the golden age of Cashmere, when art, architecture, and learning flourished alongside his military achievements. Lalitaditya's conquests have been chronicled in numerous texts, including Al-Biruni, the Persian scholar, in his *Tarikh-i-Hind* and *Xing Tang Shu*, a book documenting the history of the Chinese Tang Dynasty, which highlighted the great achievements of Muktapada.

Muktapada's name is closely associated with Shankaracharya Takht-e-Sulaiman Hills. The importance of the Shankaracharya shrine on the ancient spiritual mountain of Takht-e-Sulaiman is a living example of pluralism, Rishi culture, and the unity of spiritual ideologies in Cashmere.

European historians have erroneously written in various historical chronicles that Adi Shankaracharya, whose Reshiya bode prominently exists over the summits of Takht-e-Sulaiman, was born in 788 CE. However, original sutra references available in Sharda Peeth repeatedly state that Adi Shankaracharya was born in 510 BCE.

Authentic research published in *The Theosophist* magazine in 1883 referred to the importance of Shankaracharya and his existence in Cashmere since 510 BCE. British historians deliberately ignored the facts that Adi Shankaracharya established four Peethas at Shringeri in the South, Dwarka in the West, Govardhana Matha in the East, and Jyothir Math in the North, along with the Kanchi Matha. Dwarka Peetha in the West records the birth date of Shankaracharya as 2631 of the Yudhishthira era, corresponding to 509 BCE.

These references from Sharda Peeth clearly indicate that Shankaracharya belonged to the BCE era, completely negating European historians. Even copper plates in Dwarka correctly place the birth of Adi Shankaracharya in 509 BCE. Therefore, the existence of Adi Shankaracharya on the summit of Takht-e-Sulaiman was treated by Sultana Kota Rani as a symbol of the unity of faiths.

The ancient name of Takht-e-Sulaiman is associated with the Zovaerian era, which believes Sulaiman was a great prophet who would fly on his throne around the globe. In Azerbaijan and Cashmere, similar takhts exist that match the Nowha Temple in Shanzi, China, on the Raina Mountains.

The great Sulaiman is mentioned in Islamic texts as the most prominent prophet among a galaxy of 124,000 spiritual prophets. The temple in the name of Adi Shankaracharya is considered the oldest temple in Cashmere.

The earliest historical reference to the hill comes from Kalhana, who called the mountain 'Gopadri' or 'Gopa Hill'. Kalhana states that King Gopaditya granted land at the foot of the hill to a cluster of devotees from the "Aryadesa." The land grant, an agraharam, was called 'Gopa Agraharas,' and the area is now known as Gupkar.

Pandit Anand Koul, in 1924, while presenting his research on these temples, described that the Shankaracharya Temple was originally built by King Sandiman, who reigned in Cashmere from 2629–2564 BCE. It was extensively renovated by King Gopaditya (426–365 BCE) and later by King Lalitaditya.

Kalhana also mentions that King Gopaditya built the temple on the top of the hill as a shrine to Jyesthesvara (Shiva Jyestharuda), which was completed around 371 BCE. This fact is corroborated in the writings of Abul Fazl. The temple was visited by Adi Shankaracharya (early 3rd century BCE) and has ever since been associated with him. This is how the temple and hill came to be known as Shankaracharya.

It was here that Adi Shankaracharya composed his Reshiya work, *Soundarya Lahari*, which inspired the true Reshi class of Cashmere. Sultana Kota Rani seems impressed with such Reshiya works and considered this hillock a seat of Reshiyat. *Soundarya Lahari* describes the energy (*Shakti*) hidden in human beings, which influenced Sultana Kota Rani. There is a small room inside the stone platform below the temple where Shankaracharya stayed and performed his meditation and sadhanas.

Jewish, Christian, and Islamic texts call this hill Bagh-i-Sulaiman, meaning the "Garden of King Solomon." Sikandar Butshikan (Sikandar the Iconoclast) and Suhbhata attempted to destroy this temple, but its association with Sulaiman prevented them.

Persian inscriptions on the temple mention the name Yuz Asaf, who visited the shrine, with some claiming he even renovated it. Some books claim that Jesus visited Cashmere with the lost "Thirteenth Tribe" and was buried at the Rozabal Shrine. However, this claim has not been accepted by the majority of scholars, and even the Quran does not support the idea of Hazrat Eisa (Jesus) being in Cashmere.

Hazrat Shah Hamdan, who came from Persia, named this hillock Takht-e-Sulaiman and Bagh-e-Sulaiman. These facts acknowledge the existence of the Shankaracharya Temple over Takht-e-Sulaiman for centuries. Pandit Nehru, in *Discovery of India*, called it both Takht-e-Sulaiman and Shankaracharya Temple.

The historical hero of the Reshi Queen Sultana Kota Rani was the great King of Kashmir, Lalitaditya Muktapida of the 8th century. He was a famous ruler who conquered Kalinga (Orissa), Gauda (Bengal), Konkan, Dwarka, Avanti, Punjab, and Afghanistan. The mighty king then turned his attention to Central Asia. He subjugated Ladakh and dealt with Muhammad bin Qasim, who had invaded Multan in 712 CE. Lalitaditya turned the Tang dynasty of China into an ally in his fight against the Arabs and Tibetans. He soon faced an attack by Junaid, the

Arab governor of Sindh, who attacked Kashmir under the orders of Caliph Hisham. His Central Asian victories covered present-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, extending up to the Caspian Sea and Aranyaka (Persia).

Sultana Kota Rani's meditation at the Sun Temple has already been described. It was Lalitaditya who constructed the famous Martand Sun Temple, Naranag temples, Buddhist stupas, and established a magnificent capital at Parihaspur. The respect Kota Rani had for Lalitaditya is evident, as she always projected him during her lifetime as the great hero of Kashmir who instilled such fear in the hearts of Kashmir's enemies that for 300 years after his death, no one dared to attack the valley. She frequently visited all places associated with Lalitaditya in Kashmir.

During Sultana Kota Rani's time in the 14th century, the Naranag temples, known in Sutra texts of Sharda Peeth as the Wangath Temple, stood alongside the Wangath River. It is notable that Emperor Lalitaditya Muktapida, of the Kayastha Naga Karkota dynasty in the 8th century CE, built this shrine as an abode for the meditation of Reshis and scholars. Hence, Sultana Kota Rani often visited the shrine.

In the text *Rajatarangini,* the Wangath Valley near the sacred spring of Naranag is also mentioned. Around the same period, the Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar and the Bumazuv Temple near Mattan were constructed. Later, Emperor Lalitaditya dedicated these sites for Reshi saints to acquire knowledge.

The Naga Karkotas were Kashmiri Kayasthas of the Naga sect, known for their reverence of serpents. The Reshis were said to have such spiritual powers that they could tame even cobras. In Harwan, earlier known as Hari Chandran Mountain, the Mahadeove Mountain stands opposite the Buddhist Mountain. Reshis performed their sadhanas in this region, and the sages are believed to have stayed there.

Sultana Kota Rani often visited Baramulla, which had Reshi abodes. Even intruders from Swat hiding their identities had settled in Baramulla. Originally, Baramulla was called Varahamulla in Sanskrit, meaning "the place of the Varaha incarnation." Over time, Varahamulla was shortened to Varmul. The city was founded by Raja Bhimsina in 2306 BCE. Connecting the valley to the outside world, especially Hazara, Gilgit, and Gandhara, the town became a significant cultural center for Hindus and Buddhists.

Kota Rani often stayed at Koti Tirtha, a Reshi site in the Adi Varaha shrine, where many Reshis of Adi Varaha assembled for meditation. Unfortunately, the shrine was vandalized by Sikander Butshikan, the iconoclast.

During Kota Rani's time, Martand was known as Martanda, which means "Sun God," and "Bavan" derives from the Sanskrit word *Bhavana.* The site of Martand was earlier referred to as Vishnu Bhawan or Macch (Fish) Bhawan. Martanda (Surya) was born from Aditi, the wife of Kashyap Rishi. Since Kota Rani studied at Sharda Peeth, she was well-versed in Kashmiri Reshi traditions.

According to scriptures, Aditi gave birth to twelve offspring. However, she gave birth to a thirteenth son prematurely and left him like a frozen egg in the waters of Satisar (Kashmir). This son remained there for a long period. When Kashyap Rishi returned to Satisar to kill the demon Jalobhava, who lived underwater, he, with divine blessings, cut through the mountains near Baramulla to drain the waters of Satisar. Thereafter, he found the frozen egg, which he recalled as his thirteenth son, Martanda, left by his wife Aditi. The egg emitted light, symbolizing Martanda. Reshis meditated at this site, treating it as an abode of the Sun Temple.

Texts like *Nilamata Purana* reveal that Martanda was made the supreme deity for *Malmass* by Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh after Kashyap Rishi's prayers. The Malmass festival, held at Mattan every two-and-a-half years, gained prominence when Emperor Lalitaditya gave the ancient temple a complete facelift. According to Kalhana's *Rajatarangini,* the main image of Surya, made of copper, was destroyed by King Kalasa in 1075 CE. He replaced it with a gold image, which was later plundered by Sikander in 1413 CE. Walter R. Lawrence noted, "The ruins of the Hindu temple of Martand, or as is commonly called, the Pandav-Koru House, occupy the finest position in Kashmir. This noble ruin is the most striking in size and situation of all the existing remains of Kashmiri grandeur."

Being a Reshi, Sultana Kota Rani learned at Sharda Peeth to treat Kashmir's environment as an integral part of spirituality. Vitasta (Jhelum) originates from the spring (Nag) called Verah Naag. Kota Rani, who meditated at the source of the Jhelum, cherished this sacred connection.

It is noteworthy that the Kashmiri name for spring is Nag. Kota Rani visited several significant Nagas, including Nilnag (Verinag) in Anantnag and Nilnag in Yusmarg. Other Nagas include Vicharanag, Sukhnag, Kokarnag, and Vaishakhnag. As per rituals documented in the *Nilamata Purana,* Reshis considered these sites vital for spiritual practices. Owing to its sacred origin, the valley is also known as *Rishi Wari,* filled with Reshi shrines and other places of worship.

Amidst this atmosphere of Reshiyat, Kota Rani often argued with her father, the Prime Minister and King of Kashmir, about safeguarding Kashmiri traditions against continuous cultural invasions. Her vision for true human unity was reflected in the rituals, traditions, and architecture of Kashmir.

Kalhana, the ancient chronicler of Kashmir, praised the region, stating that Kashmir, since ancient times, was blessed with saffron, iced water, lofty houses, and grapes unmatched even in paradise.

Many centuries before Kota Rani's time, Buddhism thrived alongside existing religions, merging seamlessly with Kashmiri culture. In this confluence of traditions, Buddhism and Hinduism became synonymous in their expressions of spirituality and art.

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CHAPTER

Abundance of Sacred Naags [springs] as source of Reshi spirituality for Sultana Kota Rani

Sultana Kota Rani, since childhood, had observed that in Cashmere, Reshi saints preferred to meditate in deep forests, on the shores of lakes, and on the summits of spiritual mountains. These saints were naturalists, merging themselves with the surrounding atmosphere. They grew not merely by the sun and stars, the wind and rain, but by the creative spirits. Their precepts, practices, and work were always in tune with the beauty of the environment.

Sultana Kota Rani grew up amidst a galaxy of great saints, seers, and Shaivites whose ideologies enriched, elevated, and refined life, helping people in distress. Among these, Miran Reshi was her ideal Reshi. His eyes shone like stars, the glow of the sun surrounded him during the day, and the glitter of the moon illuminated the dark nights.

From time immemorial, Reshies in Cashmere transcended the bonds of communities, conventions, place, and time. In Cashmere, Rishiyat is considered a universal phenomenon. The region is known as *Reshiwari*, meaning a habitat of Reshis. These saints' foremost contribution to mankind was instilling a sense of unity among various religions and faiths. Mysticism provided a new perception of the nature of existence and science in general.

Sultana Kota Rani was conscious that Cashmere was famous for its Pratyabhijnya system of Cashmir Shaivism, originated by Somananda. Utpaldeva, Abhinavagupta, and others were its primary expounders. Additionally, Buddhism had a strong presence in Cashmere. The Mahayana *Tasawuf* of Buddhism has a long history in the region. A great Buddhist Council was held during Kanishka's time near Harwan Chandran, a site still in existence, then known as *Kundala-Vana-Vihara*.

Like Kota Rani, Cashmere produced many Sanskrit scholars and mystics. The main language of the region was Cashmeri, allied to the Sanskritic-Indo-Aryan languages. Cashmere poetry began with the works of great mystic scholars, both male and female, like Lahri Sundariya. The Reshi philosophy of Shankaracharya's *Advaita* was studied by Kota Rani on the summits of *Takht-e-Sulaiman*.

The land of Cashyap Rishi, dotted with sacred spiritual springs (*Nagas*), was often described as a jewel. Nature endowed this enchanting land with towering snow peaks, swinging forests, singing streams, flowery dales, and golden meadows—a heaven on earth admired by Kota Rani since childhood.

Analyzing the transition of Reshi and Sufi philosophies during Sultana Kota Rani's time reveals that from the early secret philosophies (*Gupt philosophies*) of Lalitaditya's period to Kota Rani's era, these remained dominant. Somananda is said to have been the disciple of Siddha Vasugupta, who founded and expounded the "Shaiva Sutras." Somananda's disciple, Siddha Utpaladeva, further elucidated this philosophy. Shri Abhinavagupta Acharya dominated philosophical thought during this era, covering the period up to the 12th century. Jayaratha wrote a commentary on Abhinavagupta's great work, *Tantraloka*. Abhinavagupta himself lived in Cashmere during the late 10th and early 11th centuries.

Earlier, in the 8th century, Achariya Attri Gupta, a great Shaivite Reshi teacher, served as the personal spiritual guide of King Lalitaditya. Attri Gupta attained high spiritual status in Cashmere. Lalitaditya ruled Cashmere from 700–736 A.D. The king built a spacious house for Attri Gupta on the banks of the Jhelum (Vitasta), near present-day Khankah of Hazrat Bulbulshah, and granted him a large estate for his maintenance.

Many generations of Achariya Attri Gupta's spiritual legacy continued until Achariya Abhinavagupta, who disappeared along with 1,200 Gupt Reshi saints from the Beerwah cave near the Bhaerove temple. One of his descendants, Varahagupta, became a great scholar of Shaiva philosophy. His son, Narasimhagupta (alias Chukhala), the father of

Abhinavagupta, was also a prominent Shaiva teacher. Achariya Abhinavagupta is considered a Shiva incarnate by some.

Sultana Kota Rani learned through Lahri Sundariya and various Sutras that Cashmir Shaivism is called *Trika* philosophy. *Trika* refers to the threefold science of man and his world, encompassing the individual (*anu*), the energy (*shakti*), and the universal (*shiva*). The purpose of *Trika* is to show how an individual ascends to the state of universality through energy. Abhinavagupta classified *Trika* into four systems: Krama, Spanda, Kula, and Pratyabhijnya. The Krama system deals with space and time.

In Cashmere, tracing a person's *Krama* (lineage) often linked them to their ancient Reshi stream, spanning seven generations. Sultana Kota Rani, a devotee of Achariya Abhinavagupta's ideology, understood and appreciated how Reshi Saint Abhinavagupta explained the concept of spacelessness. She was particularly impressed by how he taught that space exists only when one deals with forms. In a formless state, space ceases to exist.

Miran Reshi was the link through whom Kota Rani connected with this elevated philosophical status. Achariya Abhinavagupta explained spacelessness as a movement that is no movement, a philosophy mirrored in the Sufi concept of *La Makaniyat*. The disappearance of 1,200 Reshies from the Beerwah cave is considered an achievement of this spiritual Reshi-Sufi cult.

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11
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's Consciousness about Spiritual Philosophies of Attri Gupta & Abhinavgupta

Sultana Kota Rani, as described, considered Lalta Datiya Muktapada a role model for Cashmere triumphs all over the globe. She believed that the spiritual contribution of Lalta Datiya Muktapada in introducing Attri Gupta and his descendant Reshi saints up to Abhinavagupta, along with 1200 saints, seers, and sages, was the secret behind all his victories. Similarly, constructing the Abode of Adi Shankaracharya over Takhat-e-Sulaiman symbolized all his triumphs across the subcontinent. Her confrontation with her Prime Minister, father, and the king of the time arose from their refusal to adopt the Lalta Datiya model of Reshi-dominated administration.

These Reshi saints enriched the wisdom of Cashmere. Abhinavagupta stated that the state of God-consciousness is already present. He concluded that in this universe, one must see and realize the Kingdom of God-consciousness everywhere and nothing else.

Abhinavagupta was the pride of Cashmere, as his works and teachings continue to deeply influence discerning people. His disappearance, along with 1200 Reshi saints of high repute, was part of that consciousness where time and space determine the speed of souls rather than human bodies.

King Lalitaditya (725–761), also known as Muktapida, defeated the King of Kannauj, Yasovarman, after receiving in advance a message of victory from the great Reshi Saint Attri Gupta. Muktapada became a sincere devotee of Reshi Saint Attri Gupta and granted him a high place and status in Cashmere. A new city on the outskirts of Pravarapura (Srinagar), Parihasapura, was built by Lalta Datiya Muktapada.

The silence of Kalhana regarding Attri Gupta and the Abhinavagupta chain of mystic Reshi saints in Cashmere is intriguing. Nowhere do their names appear prominently as mystic scholars of repute in his Rajatarangini chronicle. However, maximum Sutra and Reshi chronicles elaborate on the fame and status achieved by Acharya Attri Gupta, Acharya Vasugupta, and Abhinavagupta during their respective periods and even after. This omission in Kalhana's work has surprised many historians, and further research might shed light on this oversight. Historically and through Sutra, Abhinavagupta's birth is placed near 940 A.D. He might have lived beyond 1015 A.D. Tradition holds that he entered a cave while reciting the *Bhairavastava*, along with 1200 disciples, and was never seen again. For centuries, weekly rituals were conducted by Zeerak Reshi, awaiting the return of the Reshi caravan. The belief in their reappearance led to spiritual performances at the entry and exit points of the Beerwah cave, which Sultana Kota Rani herself attended several times.

The cave where Reshi Saint Abhinavagupta and his mortal frame were believed to exist for centuries was later abandoned. The Abhinavagupta cave is located at "Beerwah." On Kalhana's authority, it is known that Lalitaditya had built a house for the founder of Gupta mysticism, Attri Gupta, on the shores of Vitasta (Jhelum), near Bharoe Temple. Beerwah was also known for Bharoe Cave and Bharoe Temple, later developed by Sangramraja into Beerwah city, dedicated to Abhinavagupta.

As mentioned earlier, Sultana Kota Rani studied Shankaracharya's *Saundarya Lahari* at the temple of knowledge. This is considered the first Reshi Nama of Cashmere, influenced by ancestral Kashmiri Shaiva traditions. Through *Saundarya Lahari*, Acharya conceded the existence of monistic existence. At this time, with Buddhism being banished, the vacuum created was filled by the Acharyas. Abhinavagupta does not claim originality for introducing Shaiva philosophy but candidly records that he followed the same tradition of thought, influenced by Lahari Sundariya, the first Reshi chronicle of Cashmere.

It can be argued that Abhinavagupta did not compose any treatise independently but only commented on his predecessors' works. His views embodied the experiences gained through spiritual experiments. He lived by the maxims on which he commented. Therefore, his contribution to this system of philosophy is not merely of academic interest but encompasses dimensions of thought that even the originators failed to comprehend.

Abhinavagupta set norms for personal experience, reasoning, and scripture. Within this context, he sought to explain the domain of his experience. As a true son of the soil of Cashmere, he did not advocate a fanatical devotion to his line of thinking. Instead, he urged individuals to face life and not flee from it. As a practical thinker, he encouraged us to understand life and redeem it in its truest perspective. His positive attitude toward life and the universe made existence more meaningful and rewarding.

Reshi Saint Abhinavagupta did not preach discarding the world or disowning its responsibilities, as it is essentially real. Instead, he emphasized recognizing oneself in the image of the Lord, who is not different from us. By developing true perception and a healthy attitude toward the environment, one can recognize oneself and become self-effulgent.

Sultana Kota Rani, as a true devotee of Abhinavagupta, comprehended the dimension of vision between the "ideal" and the "real," like an unblurred mirror. Abhinavagupta admirably performed his mission, saving humanity from the intellectual entanglements of Buddhist theology, which culminated in nothingness. Similarly, he rejected other Indian philosophical systems that dismissed the present in favor of preparing for the future.

Abhinavagupta affirmed the existence of the present, treating it not as a means but as an end. Living in the present, taking life as it comes, and mastering it through perception and cognition are sound prescriptions for today's strife-torn world. He believed that restlessness could be converted into the calm serenity of the super-soul.

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12
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani abnegated all doctrines of hate and shaped Cashmere to be embodiment of mutual love contrary to PM & King.

Since this research book on the Reshi characteristics of Sultana Reshi Queen Kota Rani has to do justice to how she transitioned from the ancient Reshi order of Cashmere to the new Sufi order of Hazrat Bulbulshah, it is crucial to highlight her sole aim to defend and protect Cashmere civilization. In light of earlier research conducted on ideologies and perceptions in Cashmir from 1295 A.D., when Kota Rani was born, till 1319 A.D., Cashmir faced its biggest terror attack from the savage Zulju, Zulqader Khan, commonly known as Dalcha in Cashmir.

Sultana Kota Rani took full responsibility to protect Cashmere at a juncture when it was betrayed not only by the King of Cashmere, Suha Deva, but also by Prime Minister Ramachandra, who was the father of Sultana Kota Rani.

The change of rule from Simha Deva to Suha Deva coincides with the birth year of Sultana Kota Rani. Authentic references reveal that there was no obvious conflict between Simha Deva and any prominent rival. Even his son Suha was not traceable, and no one knew of his whereabouts. Therefore, the mysterious death of Simha Deva was intriguing, for which the role of Ramachandra cannot be ruled out, as he was the primary beneficiary of Simha Deva's sudden death.

While various historical records do not establish any relationship between Ramachandra and Suha Deva, the sensitive developments surrounding Simha Deva's sudden mysterious death can be attributed to the conspiracies of Ramachandra, the Prime Minister of Cashmere.

Cashmere had witnessed prolonged, blood-soaked conflict between the Sussalas and Uchachalas. Lakshmanadeva is referred to in many historical chronicles as having only one son, Simha Deva, who comfortably took over the kingship after the death of Lakshmanadeva. However, Simha Deva was mysteriously found dead in his room in 1295 A.D., and Ramachandra suddenly appeared on the scene. Ramachandra had intimate relations with both the Damaras of Lohar Kot and the inhabitants of Cashmere, which allowed him to use his influence while administering Cashmere.

Lakshmanadeva, who had taken control over the empire, was skeptical of making Ramachandra the new king of Cashmere. However, after the mysterious death of Simha Deva, Ramachandra played a mysterious role that made him the de facto Lohara Prime Minister, wielding absolute power.

History bears witness to the fact that it was Ramachandra who brought forth Suha Deva, a 13-year-old boy, as the son of Lakshmanadeva. Some referred to Suha Deva as the younger brother of Simha Deva. Ramachandra claimed that the boy had been handed over to him by Simha Deva to impart Vedic and mystic Gupta education to him.

Ramachandra succeeded in keeping both factions of followers from the previous Sussala and Uchachala dynasties under his influence. He put his own family descendant, Udayadeva, as Suha Deva on the throne of Cashmere and abandoned his claim to the throne. This clever move satisfied the Devas while also keeping the next generation of Sussalas and Uchachalas, already under Ramachandra's influence, calm.

Even though Ramachandra lost a family member to install Udayadeva as king, during the same period, his daughter, Kota Rani, was born. Her elder brother was Rawanchandra, who was 10–11 years old. Deep studies of the age differences among Suha, Rawana, and Kota vary from 3 to 10 years.

Historical records consistently refer to Suha as Suha Deva and not as Suha Chandra or Udayadeva. Some call him the son of Simha Deva, while others call him the younger brother. These discrepancies can be surmised based on the circumstances and beneficiaries of the power shift.

Ramachandra, being the most powerful person of that time, could not easily usurp the throne; therefore, he had to present the younger son of Simha Deva, who was mysteriously found dead in his room. In doing so, he disturbed the equilibrium of his own family. His wife, the mother of Kota Rani and Rawanchandra, was shocked, as Suha Deva became the king of Cashmere, while her husband, Ramachandra, controlled the empire through Suha Deva.

Until Suha Deva grew up, Ramachandra effectively administered the kingdom, focusing on accumulating gold and jewels in the kingdom's treasury at Yarqand Sarai. Ramachandra involved his wife and young children, Rawanchandra and Kota Rani, in the top affairs of the kingdom, which he controlled absolutely, while Suha Deva remained a mere puppet. However, Ramachandra's wife, a noble, religiously inclined woman, focused more on Reshiyat and meditation.

The Prime Minister's wife was unhappy with Ramachandra, particularly after 1312 A.D., when their elder son disappeared from their house. Ramachandra's suspicious role led to a loss of trust from his own wife. In subsequent years, the young Kota Rani and Rawanchandra remained engrossed in their studies at Sharda Peeth under the spiritual guidance of distinguished Reshis of the time.

When Sultana Kota Rani reached adulthood, she had mastered her studies and gained deep knowledge of Cashmere. Even prominent scholars and administrators of the time could not match her competence. She was also trained in self-defense and war skills by the best sword experts of the time. Her horse-riding skills surpassed those of other extraordinary riders.

Kota Rani's bravery astonished all, as she would defend her companions against lions in deep forests. Historians often praise her honesty, dedication, and piety, comparing her glittering inner self to her extraordinary outer beauty. She had surveyed the entire kingdom during her studies, even as her father, Ramachandra, held de facto power while Suha Deva served as a puppet king.

* * *

13

CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's candour approach to resist Mongol Terror won the hearts of people of Cashmere

The obvious reason was that Prime Minister Ramachandra played fraud and tricked not only the empire and the people of Cashmere but also the Reshi class of society and even his own kith and kin. His conspiracies and policies resulted in friction between different sections, including his own family. His daughter, Sultana Kota Rani, and his wife, who was also the mother of Rawanachandra, were not impressed with his Machiavellian conduct and handling of affairs. The huge treasures were collected jointly by the King and the Prime Minister.

Sultana Kota Rani had heard all the details about her Prime Minister father's role at the time when Simha Deva died an unnatural death in the most mysterious way. Since then, her father was in direct conflict with his pious wife, who was aware of how Ramachandra became Prime Minister and installed the 13-year-old Suha Deva as a puppet emperor.

The research of that time provides a golden opportunity to compile a comparative analysis of various Reshi and Sufi streams of the globe. The study of the surrounding material of that period reveals that winds of Khurasan and Baghdad Sufi thoughts started knocking on the doors of Cashmere. The study of these new spiritual thoughts, piercing through the atmosphere of the paradise of Cashmere, made the young Sultana Kota Rani a true strategic expert of renaissance and unity.

With time, Suha Deva was no longer completely under the influence of his Prime Minister, Ramachandra. Although the emperor was neither competent nor capable of removing Ramachandra from the post of Prime Minister, he slipped out of his psychological control. He also stopped heeding the strategic suggestions of Sultana Kota Rani and her brother, Rawanachandra.

Sultana Kota Rani was a proponent of Reshi culture and always desired that Suha Deva seek advice from Reshi saints about the defense of Cashmere. She warned both Suha Deva and Ramachandra about the rising threat of Mongol terror consolidating around Cashmere.

The hordes of Mongols were targeting one country after another for treasures, loot, and territorial capture. Sultana Kota Rani suggested to King Suha Deva that the treasure accumulated by the emperor and the Prime Minister would become a liability and a bone of contention between them and her father if it was not immediately utilized to create a powerful army reminiscent of the Lalta Datiya Muktapada period. She predicted that unutilized treasures in the Yarqand Saraie treasury would one day endanger the innocent population of Cashmere.

Sultana Kota Rani argued that with such immense treasures, a huge army equipped with the most advanced defensive infrastructure could be established. She strongly believed that the Mongols would invade Cashmere at any moment, targeting these treasures. The only way to protect the innocent population was to transform the wealth into a sophisticated defensive mechanism.

Sultana Kota Rani also proposed that the strategies of Lalta Datiya Muktapada, combined with the spirituality of Attri Gupta and Abhinavagupta, could serve as experienced guidelines for launching an armed attack to eliminate the Mongol threat at its source in Mongolia before they could strategize to invade Cashmere. However, her father, who did not support Sultana Kota Rani's and Rawanachandra's ideologies, ridiculed them for unnecessarily inviting trouble.

Prime Minister Ramachandra and Emperor Suha Deva instead praised the natural defensive mountains of Cashmere. They claimed that these mountains, placed by spiritual forces, were so formidable that even an enemy mosquito could not enter without the emperor's permission. They credited the lofty mountain ranges, which had once stopped the dreaded forces of Mahmud Ghaznavi, rather than the warrior Sangramaraja's efforts, for protecting Cashmere.

The historical reality, however, is that Mahmud Ghaznavi, after conquering Lohara, which was an integral part of Cashmere from time immemorial, advanced towards Cashmere. His advance was halted due to weather turbulence and hurricanes. But during his second invasion, Mahmud Ghaznavi's forces were prepared to face any abnormal weather. It was the Reshi ideologue and King Sangramaraja of the Lohara dynasty who showcased his historic bravery and defeated Mahmud Ghaznavi during the 11th century on the Tosamaidan summits. In contrast, the emperor and Prime Minister of 14th-century Cashmere attributed their safety solely to spiritual powers and did little to defend their people and kingdom.

Sultana Kota Rani was not convinced by her father or the emperor's passive stance. She was the embodiment of love for her homeland and kept a vigilant eye on border developments. She established contacts through Reshi saints with Buddhist scholars of neighboring Tibet, Ladakh, Kashgar, Shaanxi in China, and the summits of Ren Hills in Nowha, akin to the shrine of Adi Shankaracharya over Takht.

Sultana Kota Rani and her brother, through patriots of Cashmere, learned that the grandson of Halco Khan was planning to attack Cashmere and had started advancing through the Shahrah-e-Abrashim. This alarming situation prompted Sultana Kota Rani to advise her father, Ramachandra, and Emperor Suha Deva about the impending threat. However, as usual, they paid no attention to address the challenge.

When Zulju Zulqadar Khan, also known as Dalcha, reached the borders of Cashmere, there was no army to resist his advance towards Srinagar. Sultana Kota Rani and her brother rushed to the palace to inform Suha Deva, only to find Ramachandra, the Prime Minister, and Emperor Suha Deva fighting over the treasures in the Yarqand Saraie treasury.

* * *

14
CHAPTER

Carouse habits and luxurious approaches of Emperor & Prime Minister constrained Sultana Kota Rani to take up sword against terror.

Since childhood, King Suha Deva was under the psychological influence of his secret de facto father and powerful Prime Minister Ramachandra. However, after Suha Deva became an adult and conscious enough to handle his own affairs, he rebelled against Ramachandra. The invasion of the Mongol terror forces led by Dalcha was initially taken very lightly by the cowardly King of Cashmere and Ramachandra, the Chief of Defense Forces. Both deliberately avoided gearing up the Cashmere Army promptly to resist the invasion.

Prime Minister Ramachandra, instead of mobilizing the Cashmere Army, was keen on settling his share in the huge Cashmere treasure deposited in the Yarkand Saraie Treasury. Ramachandra demanded a lion's share of the treasure, arguing that King Suha Deva was installed by him under the condition that the exclusive right to the treasure would remain vested with the Prime Minister.

Suha Deva, who was earlier under Ramachandra's complete psychological control, had broken free, leading to long-standing differences between the two. Dalcha's invasion intensified the conflict between the Prime Minister and the King. Ramachandra was planning to kill Suha Deva and seize the entire treasure of the empire. However, Suha Deva, already alert, rushed with his personal security guards to the Yarkand Saraie Treasury to load the treasure onto horses and asses. The King, angry with his Prime Minister, claimed that as the ruler, the entire treasure belonged solely to him.

Inside the premises of the royal treasury, there was a huge scuffle between the King and the Prime Minister. The King's security guards prevailed and arrested Ramachandra, confining him to the Inderkote

Fort. Suha Deva personally supervised Ramachandra's beating by his sword brigade and ordered his half-dead body to be put in jail. When Ramachandra was dragged away, the King commanded his guards to accompany him and protect the treasure as it was transported towards Kishtwar Paddar.

While fleeing Srinagar, abandoning the people of Cashmere to their fate amidst the Mongol terror invasion, Sultana Kota Rani rushed to the borders of Srinagar at Pandaw Chowkh Ruins. She begged King Suha Deva not to leave Cashmere, emphasizing that the people needed their King and army to defend them from the horrors of the Mongols. The terror army, led by Zulju Zulqader Khan Dalcha, comprising more than 70,000 savage soldiers, had entered Srinagar city and set it on fire. Smoke from burning properties could be seen from the city's borders, and even the screams and cries of the slain innocent men and women could be heard. However, the Emperor, deaf to her pleas, continued to flee.

Suha Deva first asked Sultana Kota Rani, being his blood sister, to flee Cashmere with him. He justified his actions by claiming that protecting the huge Cashmere treasure was more important. He believed the Mongols were coming to seize the treasure, not to conquer Cashmere. He also informed her that Ramachandra, her father, had been beaten and arrested because of his greed and the conspiracies he had orchestrated, which destroyed the entire family for his personal lust, greed, and luxuries.

Sultana Kota Rani, already disillusioned with her father's actions, did not object to his arrest. However, she desperately wanted Emperor Suha Deva to stay and defend Cashmere. Despite her pleas, the King's personal guards pushed her away. She fell from her horse as the Emperor's fleeing brigade left. Rising alone, she grabbed the sword of a departing guard, mounted her horse, and rushed back toward Srinagar, waving the sword like a flag and determined to defend her homeland.

Sultana Kota Rani and Rawanchandra (Udhadeva) insisted on immediately mobilizing the Cashmere Army to demonstrate the valor of the people of Cashmere, as Lalitaditya Muktapada and Sangramraja had done in the past. However, their suggestions were met with cowardly and greedy responses.

King Suha Deva, along with his royal family and a large contingent of forces, fled Cashmere during the night through an unknown route to an unknown destination. The people of Cashmere were abandoned to their fate. Sultana Kota Rani and her brother, being true patriots, chose to remain in Cashmere, prepared to sacrifice their lives while protecting the valley and its people during this critical time.

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15
CHAPTER

Plundering, Destruction, Arson, Raping and Slaughter by Dalcha, Zulqader Khan caused havoc in Cashmere.

When Sultana Kota Rani was begging her father Ramachandra and King Suha Deva to stand up like Lalitaditya Muktapada and Sangramraja to resist the invasion of Cashmere boldly, the catastrophic situation had engulfed the entire valley.

The greedy, cowardly King Suha Deva, who was suddenly projected to the throne after the death of Simha Deva by Ramachandra at the age of 13, became so unconcerned with the fate of his people that, before escaping from Cashmere, he had his mentor arrested and beaten half to death, even though some claim Ramachandra could have been his father. Some historians even call Ramachandra "Udhaydeva," suggesting he might have been Suha Deva's brother.

From the young age of 13, with the full support of the Prime Minister who installed him, Suha Deva accumulated a massive treasure of sapphire jewels and wealth. However, when Cashmere was invaded, and there was an urgent need to utilize this treasure to raise an army of warriors, he showed no courage to defend the people of Cashmere.

Sultana Kota Rani and Rawanchandra (Udhaydeva) informed Suha Deva, the last Lohara King of Cashmere, about the advancing Mongol terror. They pleaded with both Ramachandra and Suha Deva to rush to the borders to stop the invasion. Instead, they headed to the *Toshakhana* at Yarkand Saraie, the official treasury, to measure and divide their treasure.

Dalcha Zulju Zulqader Khan, a descendant of Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, and Hulagu Khan, symbolized savagery. When he reached the borders of Cashmere, he brought terror in the form of plunder, destruction, rape, slaughter, and arson. He invaded Cashmere through

Tosamaidan, the same route Mahmood Ghaznavi had previously used. However, unlike the past, there was no Reshi King Sangramraja to stop him. History remembers Suha Deva and Ramachandra with contempt and disdain. Neither made any attempt to face Zulqader Khan, who advanced swiftly toward Srinagar, the capital of the kingdom.

At this juncture, as Dalcha Zulqader Khan had free rein to plunder Cashmere, reduce cities to ashes, rape women, and behead children, the escaping emperor refused to stop at Pandaw Chowk (modern Pandchowkh) despite Sultana Kota Rani's desperate requests. She, however, never lost hope of saving Cashmere. With valor and faith in spiritual forces, Sultana Kota Rani and her brother sent emissaries to Tibet and Shaanxi to seek help from the Tibetan prince, Rinchen Shah. A spiritual vision greatly influenced Rinchen Shah, and by a remarkable coincidence, he received a surprise invitation from Sultana Kota Rani to come to Cashmere and protect its people from the terror of Zulqader Khan Dalcha.

Dalcha's invasion in 1320 AD and the subsequent destruction of the kingdom proved fatal for Cashmere. However, with spiritual blessings, this invasion did not completely result in the collapse of Cashmere's civilization. It marked the end of the Lohara dynasty, as King Suha Deva's cowardly escape was the final blow to its rule.

Earlier, the kings of the Lohara dynasty had brought immense pride to Cashmere. During Muktapada's period, Cashmere's influence extended to Shaanxi (China), Kanoj, Sindh, Punjab, Kashgar, Khunjerab Pass, Pamir Hills, K2 Mountains, Karakoram summits, Kohistan, Nuristan, Wahi (Afghanistan), Gilgit, Baltistan, Kishtwar, and even the borders of Punjab and Lahore.

The chronicles also highlight how the Lohara kings inflicted a humiliating defeat on Mahmood Ghaznavi at Tosamaidan, forcing him to flee through Nakwair Paal Gali back to Swat, from where he had launched his invasion of Cashmere. After conquering several Central Asian territories, Mahmood Ghaznavi set his sights on Cashmere but faced a crushing defeat. The heroic tales of Sangramraja, the Reshi King who defeated Mahmood Ghaznavi, remained alive in Cashmere's folklore during Kota Rani's time.

The greedy ruler Suha Deva fled to Kishtwar with the treasure, betraying the people of Cashmere and tarnishing the proud history of the Lohara kingdom. This betrayal marked the humiliating end of the dynasty. The people of Cashmere handed over the leadership to Sultana Kota Rani and Rawanchandra to fight and defend the valley.

What Hulagu Khan did to Baghdad, Zulqader Khan did to Srinagar. Savage Mongol terrorists raped women in the streets, beheaded men, looted houses, and set them on fire. Cries and mourning echoed throughout Cashmere. Suha Deva did not leave a single soldier from his royal security contingent to defend the population. This betrayal is documented in history with unparalleled condemnation.

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16
CHAPTER

Invitation to Prince of Tibet Renchenshah Gyalsonto

Sultana Kota Rani's desire to save Cashmere yielded results. She conducted massive prayer gatherings of unarmed, helpless people who mourned and wept, collectively praying to divinity for help. They loudly chanted, pleading for God to save Cashmere during the crisis. Special emissaries of Kota Rani approached the benevolent and kind Prince of Tibet, Rinchen Shah, the son of Rinchen Gayalpo Gyeltsen, an esteemed Khagan linked to the Yuan dynasty and a prominent Buddhist scholar.

Sultana Kota Rani sent emissaries to the Prince of Tibet to seek his help in defending Cashmere after hearing great praise about his warrior skills and his zeal to defend humanity. Kota Rani and Rawanchandra, abandoned by the dynasty's forces who had fled, moved from place to place and house to house, guided by their patriotic passion to protect whomever they could. They fought terrorists individually, saving homes wherever it was humanly possible.

Upon receiving the invitation from the people of Cashmere through Kota Rani, the arrival of Rinchen Shah from Tibet, determined to save the victims of terror, proved highly fortunate for the entire civilization. The wrath inflicted by the savage Dalcha Zulqader Khan on the unarmed population of Cashmere strengthened Rinchen Shah's resolve to punish the Mongol terrorists. His true human spirit made him a hero of Cashmere, which was regarded as the jewel of Tibet and one of the largest Central Asian territories.

G.M.D. Sufi recorded in his writings that the people of Cashmere referred to Sultan Sadr-ud-Din Rinchen Shah as the "Lion of Cashmere" for his bravery during this critical period in history. In 1320 AD, Rinchen Shah became the only hope for the people of Cashmere, arriving from Tibet after receiving a spiritual command to save them.

At the Karakoram Mountains, he was gifted a mysterious dagger by a malang (mystic) at the Khunjerab Pass to use against the terrorizing Mongols, who did not believe in the existence of any God.

Rinchen Shah kept the malang's dagger and, in return, gifted his own blue-jeweled dagger to Sultana Kota Rani after their meeting at Khunjerab Pass. This dagger, along with his own sword, became a symbol of divine blessings during Sadr-ud-Din Rinchen Shah's campaign against the Mongol terror led by Zulqader Khan Dalcha. The terror-stricken Mongol leader, fearing Rinchen Shah's retaliation, never returned to South Cashmere and made his exit through Tosamaidan.

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17
CHAPTER

Interaction at Khanjreeb Summit between Prince of Tibet Renchenshah and Sultana Kota Rani of Cashmere

Sultana Kota Rani received the Prince of Tibet, Rinchen Shah, at the entry point of Cashmere on the Karakoram Mountains, which later came to be known as Khanjreeb Pass. A warm and rousing reception was accorded to him by none other than Sultana Kota Rani herself, along with her brother Rawanchandra (Udayadeva).

Rinchen Shah was deeply impressed by the extraordinary patriotic grace of Sultana Kota Rani, her profound knowledge, and her genuine zeal to defend Cashmere. The rare blue-jeweled dagger, which Rinchen Shah always carried, was gifted to Kota Rani at the entry point. From then on, this place became known as Khanjreeb Pass. Rinchen Shah advised Kota Rani to always keep the dagger with her, saying it would protect her from all evils.

Rinchen Shah arrived in Cashmere to protect its honor and esteem. The philosophy of "Ren" from Confucius, the ancient Chinese thinker, had a profound influence on him. This philosophy emphasized human love and compassion, much like the spiritual vision of *Wahdat ul Wajood* later presented by Ibn Arabi. It was later elaborated in movements like the Renaissance, Theosophy, and Pluralism.

When Rinchen Shah learned that Cashmere had been plundered by Dalcha Zulqader Khan, it prompted him to rush to the region. It is also said that the Great Prophet appeared to Rinchen Shah in a dream, and this *Noorani* (divine) spiritual vision further influenced him to protect Cashmere from Dalcha's tyranny.

Upon meeting Reshi Queen Sultana Kota Rani for the first time at Khanjreeb Pass, Rinchen Shah gifted her his own royal dagger (*khanjar*) for self-protection, advising her to use it during crises. Historical accounts reveal that this very dagger was used by Kota Rani to defend her purity and honor against Shams Swati, humiliating him as her blood-soaked face became a testament to her resolve.

After reaching Srinagar, Rinchen Shah immediately launched a campaign to trace Dalcha Zulqader Khan, who had gone into hiding with his terror forces in the Panchal Mountains. Dalcha had burned the entire city of Srinagar, killed countless people, imprisoned many, and raped women using his cruel cavalry of 70,000 soldiers. Rinchen Shah, deeply hurt by these atrocities, vowed to punish Dalcha for his crimes, which had devastated Cashmere. However, Dalcha's fear of Rinchen Shah drove him to flee toward South Cashmere.

Rinchen Shah, a distinguished scholar and true humanist with the ancestral title of *Ren*, represented high spirituality. Upon seeing the unarmed, helpless population of Cashmere led by Kota Rani, he vowed not to leave the valley until the Mongol terrorists were completely destroyed.

Sultana Kota Rani shared with Rinchen Shah the horrors inflicted by Dalcha Zulqader Khan's forces, who beheaded young Kashmiri boys, raped women, tore bodies into pieces, and burned grand monasteries, including one at Yarkand Sarai on the shores of the Vitasta (Jhelum). They also damaged the great temple of Adi Shankaracharya on Takht-e-Sulaiman, Bharoe Temple on the Vitasta's shores, which had been the personal house of Attri Gupta, the founder of Reshi ideology during Muktapada's time, and set the entire city on fire.

Kota Rani also informed Rinchen Shah about top Buddhist Reshis who were killed by Dalcha's forces while reciting *Lahri Sundariya* at the summits of Takht-e-Sulaiman inside Shankaracharya's abode. Meditating Reshi saints were dragged from their holy caves, pulled down from the spiritual summits, and slaughtered on Cashmere's streets after their beards were shaved off. Hearing this immense damage to sacred religious sites and the slaughter of saints, Rinchen Shah vowed to teach the Mongols a lesson they would never forget.

Sultana Kota Rani believed divine help had come to Cashmere at this critical juncture. Rinchen Shah had been guided by a spiritual dream to move to Cashmere, which he described as a profound mystery that no one could unravel. Shortly after, he received a request from the emissaries of Sultana Kota Rani, seeking his help against the savage Mongols who were beheading men, raping women, and burning houses. Rinchen Shah rushed to Cashmere to rescue its helpless people.

The Karakoram Mountain Range, where the Khanjreeb Summit took place, became a witness to the merger of ideological perceptions. During the conference at Khanjreeb Pass, Sultana Kota Rani informed Rinchen Shah about the betrayal of the greedy King of Cashmere, Suha Deva, and her own father, Prime Minister Ramachandra, both of whom abandoned the people during the crisis. They were indifferent to protecting Cashmere's territory despite the suggestions of Kota Rani, her brother Rawanchandra (Udayadeva), and the revered Reshis of Cashmere.

Kota Rani lamented the helplessness of the unarmed Kashmiris, who lacked any defense system. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ramachandra and Emperor Suha Deva fought over the immense treasures accumulated in the treasury since Queen Didda's time. At a critical moment, they physically grappled for treasure boxes while Mongol forces raped women, burned houses, and beheaded unarmed youth. Suha Deva had his Prime Minister beaten by security guards, left him half-dead in jail, and escaped with the entire treasure toward Kishtwar. On the advice of Kota Rani's emissaries, Rinchen Shah chose the Karakoram Khanjreeb Pass to join Kota Rani and her brother Rawanchandra at Cashmere's entry point. Upon hearing the tales of atrocities committed by Dalcha Zulqader Khan's forces, Rinchen Shah vowed to eliminate the Mongols from Cashmere.

The conference at Khanjreeb Pass was not just a strategic meeting to plan Cashmere's defense but also a profound spiritual discourse. Historical records, Sutras, and chronicles affirm that Rinchen Shah dedicated his life to serving and protecting Cashmere. He urgently launched a vigorous campaign against Dalcha Zulqader Khan, mobilizing both his trusted contingent and the inhabitants of Cashmere under Sultana Kota Rani's leadership. Together, they aimed to reclaim Cashmere from the terror inflicted by the Mongols.

18

CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's intellectual background similar to Ren-Chen Shah's Buddhist Reshi Ideology.

The historic reception by an elite group of Cashmere, led by Sultana Kota Rani, at the Khanjreeb Point border between China and Cashmere, under the shadow of the mighty Karakoram Mountains, symbolized the merger of great spiritual thoughts on human relationships through intellectual corridors.

The full name of Renchenshah was Prince Lha-Chen-Rgyal-Bu Ren-Chen Shah. He was the son of the revered Shahazi family, connected to the highly scholarly lineage of Hsüen Tsang. Comparative research of Chinese records and Cashmere's Buddhist Sutras reveals that Hsüen Tsang, due to his high degree of knowledge, was honored with the title Mukasdeva in Cashmere during his travels in the 7th century. He was born in 602 CE, more than a hundred years after Confucius, in Chen Hui Chen, presently known as Yángchén Xiàn County, in the southeast of Shanxi Province, China, bordering Henan Province to the south.

Research on Sultana Kota Rani leads us through Sharda Peeth texts to an era when Cashmere was at the pinnacle of intellectual fraternity in China. This seat of knowledge was acclaimed by the great Prophet of Islam, who advised Arabs to acquire knowledge from China at a time when Cashmere epitomized such intellect. Lalitaditya Muktapada had brought various portions of China under his sovereign control. It was in the same century that Hiuen Tsang, a 7th-century Chinese Buddhist monk, scholar, traveler, and translator, traveled through the Silk Route connecting Kashgar, Cashmere, and Tibet.

The Khanjreeb Point interaction revealed that Sultana Kota Rani was well-versed in the spiritual shrine of Nowha, located on Renzu Mountains, also known as Raina Mountains, in Shanxi Province. This shrine was associated with Hazrat Nowha by Muslims, while the Yaons and Hans of China attributed it to their mythology, considering Nowha a Goddess alongside Fuxi.

The Reshis believed that Fuxi's philosophy aligned with the Tareeqat-e-Khafiya (Gupt), introduced by Attri Gupta in Cashmere when he became the guru of Lalitaditya and accompanied the mighty king from Kannauj to Cashmere for spiritual endeavors.

Sultana Kota Rani and Renchenshah, at Khanjreeb Pass, deliberated over ancient records, revealing that the Yans of Shanxi had established control over key regions in Shanxi, Yangchen, and Tibet by the 11th century.

The spiritual and administrative interaction between Sultana Kota Rani and Renchenshah at Khanjreeb Pass assumed immense significance in lifting Cashmere out of its catastrophic condition. When Renchenshah asked Sultana Kota Rani how she had identified him as the right person to save Cashmere, her prompt, intelligent replies impressed the Tibetan prince. Her deep study of books, including the Reshiyat texts of Sharda Peeth, the works of Confucius, and Hiuen Tsang's travelogues, enabled her to handle any subject with authority.

Sultana Kota Rani revealed that her research on Sharda Peeth made it imperative to understand spiritual places connected with humanity's vision. She believed Shanxi Mountain was as sacred as Takht-e-Sulaiman in Cashmere, where Lalitaditya Muktapada constructed the grand Adi Shankaracharya Temple and documented the Reshinamalahari Sundariya, emphasizing human love and unity. She explained that meditation with spiritual focus was the essence of Reshiyat. The terms "Ren" and "Chen" in Chinese narratives symbolized peace and sadhana (spiritual practice), representing relief and humanity.

Renchenshah learned that Cashmere had always been an abode of peace, where violence held no place. Sultana Kota Rani recounted how Lalitaditya Muktapada had defeated the forces of Junaid of Arabia, who planned to invade Cashmere after Mohammad bin Qasim. She also narrated how Reshi Lohara King Sangramraja defeated Mahmud of

Ghazni at Tosamaidan, preventing him from reaching the sacred Sita Spring in Satiharan, where Reshis meditated.

Sultana Kota Rani and Renchenshah both acknowledged that "Chen" symbolized peace and relief in Chinese philosophy, also meaning "dawn" or "morning." It represented the serenity achieved through meditation and learning. It was also a common surname in China and used in Taoist philosophy to honor the sun's warm and nourishing presence in the universe.

Sultana Kota Rani spoke of Martand, the Sun Temple built by Lalitaditya Muktapada, which the Mongol forces of Zulqader Khan Dalcha had destroyed. Before meeting Renchenshah at Khanjreeb, she recognized the high stature of the Chen status, a prestigious title used in Tibetan Buddhism to address esteemed scholars, divine figures, and accomplished lamas. This term was also applied to renowned monasteries in Shanxi, Tibet, and Harwan, Cashmere.

The Khagan dynasty ruled the Chinese belt for centuries. Renchenshah's father, Renchen Gyaltsen, was linked to the Khagan lineage. This branch of the Yuan dynasty was considered one of the most powerful and achieved the status of Renpoche, signifying high respect. Renchen Gyaltsen was made the independent ruler of Tibet, tasked with overseeing its administration. Renchen Gyaltsen, being deeply devoted to Buddhist knowledge, entrusted his son, Prince Lha-Chen-Rgyal-Bu Renchenshah, with the responsibility of safeguarding the spiritual and territorial integrity of Cashmere.

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19
CHAPTER

Great Confucius Praised Cashmere

Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchanshah and Sultana Kota Rani were both aware that before the birth of Hiuen Tsang, the world-renowned philosopher Confucius was born in China. He was named Kong Qui, though the world recognized him as "Confucius," a Latinized form of his name. Confucius's family name was Kong or Kung, and his given name was Qiu. His older family members called him "Zhòng." Confucius was born in 770 BC and died in 481 BC in Shandong Province. Like other regional states, Shandong and Shaanxi, which stretch over 600 square kilometers, lie side by side and are both renowned for their spiritual and philosophical heritage. The Zhou dynasty controlled both counties in ancient times.

Sultana Kota Rani found Renchanshah to be the right authority to understand the "Ren" philosophy of Confucius, the original form of renaissance translated as *Tasawwuf*, which was carried forward during his travels by Hiuen Tsang to Kashmir. At the Khanjreeb Pass summit, both leaders agreed to work together to save humanity from terror.

The beauty of humanity starts from the Ren mountain summits of Nowha, which were referenced with Hazrat Nuh. The Changda Khanates and Datong in Shaanxi, near Shandong, still honor the oldest shrine of Nowha and Focusi on the Ren-Renzu spiritual mountains, which predate Hiuen Tsang and Confucius. Even today, no one in China has dared to change its original name.

Sultana Kota Rani had already understood from ancient books studied at Sharda Peeth that Shaanxi means "West of the Mountains," and the Taihang Mountains border Shandong, Hebei to the east, Henan to the south, Shaanxi to the west, and Inner Mongolia to the north. She had studied the rise of Genghis [Chaingaiz] Khan from Mongolia, who was faithless and never believed in God. They were worshipers of the sky and created hordes like the Golden Horde and Silver Horde to destroy humanity.

Sultana Kota Rani had tried to convince her father, Ramchandra, and Suha Deva about the Mongol threat, but they paid no heed to her strategic analysis. Her apprehensions proved correct. The Mongols not only destroyed the human cultures of Persia, Turkistan, and Baghdad but also razed Kashmir to ashes. The King of Kashmir, Suha Deva, due to greed and cowardice, hid behind the Peer Panchal Mountains, while Ramchandra, her father, who sought to claim a share of the Yarkand Sarai treasure, was jailed in Inderkote, where he was later found dead.

During Shaanxi and Shandong travels by Hiuen Tsang to Kashmir, he documented in his travelogues that Tibet and Kashmir were one entity. Since the time of Naga Arjun, great Buddhist scholars moved between Kashmir and Tibet. As such, the two regions were not only territorially integrated but also spiritually merged. Traces of this unity exist even today, as evidenced in the present research on Sultana Kota Rani.

One internationally reputed researcher, Renchen Giyalson, a Humanity Lama, has drawn global attention by delivering a series of lectures in Western countries on the extraordinary intellectual contribution of Khagan-linked Renchen Gyaltsen in China, Shaanxi, Shandong, and Xinjiang.

Sultana Kota Rani had already studied the Ren renaissance doctrines of Confucius brought to Kashmir from Shaanxi and Tibet by Hiuen Tsang. The status of Rin Poche became akin to Sharda Peeth, an abode of purity and knowledge. The difference between Rin Poche and Sharda Peeth was mainly cultural. In Tibet, Buddhist scholars studied at Rin Poche, and the most learned scholars received the title of Rin Poche, while Sharda Peeth was associated with top Hindu and Reshi scholars conducting research.

While understanding the latest cultural positions of Shaanxi, Renchanshah informed Kota Rani that it was largely dominated by the ethnic Han majority, who make up over 99% of its population. Jin

Chinese is considered by some linguists to be a distinct language from Mandarin, and its geographical range covers most of Shaanxi.

Sultana Kota Rani had learned various languages at Sharda Peeth, enabling both Sultan Renchanshah and Sultana Kota Rani to communicate in the Yarkandi language, in which both intellectual leaders were proficient. This linguistic relationship proved beneficial for protecting Kashmir at a critical juncture when its civilization was on the verge of destruction. They discussed spirituality, Jin, and Mandarin languages spoken in Shaanxi. The shrine of Nowha was believed to be guarded by Jinaat, holding spiritual significance in Shaanxi; hence, the Jin language was considered spiritual in this area. Yuan rulers and Kung spirituality also introduced it during their rule in Tibet when the Yuan dynasty controlled the entire belt from Shaanxi to Tibet.

Through research at Sharda Peeth, Sultana Kota Rani discovered that around 1268 AD, with the support of the Yuan Dynasty and Kung Dynasty, Sakya Pa ruled Tibet while Yuan continued to govern neighboring areas. Sakya Pa presided over the division of 130,000 households in U-Tsang, establishing a local government based on a unity of politics and religion called the Gyalpo regime. The Gyalpos strictly adhered to humanity, peace, and love. In 1280 AD, after the death of Phagspa, his half-brother Renchen Gyaltsen of Shaanxi succeeded him in ruling Tibet on behalf of the Yuan and Kung Dynasties.

Sultana Kota Rani concluded, based on her studies at Sharda Peeth, that Reshiyat was a renaissance of Buddhist and Hindu faiths since the times of Confucius and Naga Arjun of Kashmir. This comparative research highlights an ancient atmosphere of peace and love. Khagan Yuan established respectable positions in the region. This class was closely linked with the highly respected Buddhist saint Renchen Gyaltsen, who, due to his high status, was authorized as the independent ruler of Tibet. He groomed his brave son, Lha-Chen-Rgyal-Bu-Renchenshah, in the philosophy of humanity to help people wherever they resided.

At that time, Tibet was largely annexed to Kashmir. When Sultana Kota Rani invited Prince Renchenshah of Tibet, it was an appeal to protect both regions. She informed him through emissaries and during the Khanjreeb summit about the inhuman actions and violations of civilization committed by Dalcha. Both Renchenshah and Kota Rani agreed that Kashmir and Tibet were one and that unity was necessary to combat terror.

Sultana Kota Rani was a prominent scholar with comprehensive knowledge of the complexities and delicacies of ancient Kashmir. Her profile, ideology, and perceptions are reflected in thousands of books referencing Kashmir. Theosophical scholars regard her as an epitome of unity of faiths. The predominant Reshi philosophy of life, focused on humanity, can be attributed to the trio of Hazrat Bulbul Shah, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, and Sultana Kota Rani. The Ren renaissance doctrine has influenced Kashmir's civilization since ancient times.

Linguistic pronunciation challenges have existed since the time of Kota Rani. In Tibet, Rin Poche, an abode of knowledge and purity, is still pronounced as Rin Poche, Rinboche, or Rinboku in Tibetan. It literally means "precious one" and may refer to a person, place, or thing—like the words "gem" or "jewel" of knowledge (Sanskrit: *Ratna*). The word consists of *rin* (value), *po* (nominalizing suffix), and *chen* (big).

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20

CHAPTER

Cashmiriyat attained status of being epitome of multi religious unity as result of endeavors of Sultana Kota Rani.

The research on Sultana Kota Rani led us to historical facts and conclusions, revealing her as a true symbol of Cashmiryat. She faced all odds, including atrocities and conspiracies, yet remained steadfast in her approach to humanity and all faiths.

Certain radical Muslim scholars avoided prefixing the word *Sultana* to her name, demonstrating a bias from this radical section. Their grievance stemmed from her emphasis on merging the ancient age-old Reshiyat with the Sufi doctrines of Bulbulshah, allowing Reshiyat to thrive in Cashmere forever. The continuity of Reshiyat in Cashmere was only made possible through her efforts.

Similarly, some Hindu scholars, particularly illogical radicals, were unhappy with her marriage to the Buddhist prince and their subsequent conversion to the doctrines of humanity as propounded by Hazrat Bulbulshah, the renowned Sufi Islamic scholar. However, the majority of scholars appreciate the significant role Sultan Renchenshah played during that critical juncture to protect Cashmere. They recognize that such a great personality of Cashmere deserved to have such a great warrior as his ideal hero.

The unfortunate factor in this narrative was the elevation of the radical Shams Swati as minister. Swati not only conspired to assassinate the noble scholar-king of Cashmere but also pushed Sultana Kota Rani into a position where she was constrained to commit suicide.

While writing this book, I conducted extensive research on each situation, every event, and all circumstances leading to specific outcomes over decades. Unfortunately, no authentic historian was a witness to this critical period. Therefore, it became necessary to understand the era and its historical personalities by researching Reshi and Sufi literature, as well as any comparative material available, including folklores of the time.

When we read Kalhana, we find that he was not a personal witness to events following King Simha Deva's time, as Kalhana died during Simha Deva's reign. Kalhana documented history from the *Neelmat Purana* up to the Karakota and Lohara dynasties, but his chronicle ends with his own death during Simha Deva's rule.

There is a significant gap in the documentation of history from Simha Deva's period to Sultan Budshah's era. It was Jona Raja who attempted to reconstruct the events based on hearsay when he was assigned to write the *Rajatarangini* during Budshah's period. Consequently, we find contradictory versions in hundreds of books written later by authors who were not personal witnesses to the events of this critical time.

To understand what truly transpired during that revolutionary period, a comparative study became essential. This included examining Chinese chronicles, Buddhist sutras, references in historical records, Hindu temple records, texts available in Sharda Peeth, accounts of Khurasaan events, Persian history, Greek records, and the impacts of Confucius. Together, these circumstantial historical references helped to reconstruct the events of this transformative era.

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21
CHAPTER

Sultan Renchenshah's arrival led to demoralization of Mongol Terror in Cashmere.

Immediately after the successful *Khanjreeb* reception by Sultana Kota Rani accorded to the revered prince of Tibet and descendant of the highest Buddhist school of thought, Renchenshah Gylson swung into action to safeguard the honor of Cashmere. His swift actions to defeat the forces of Dalcha began with a series of successes, fully supported by Sultana Kota Rani and the people in general. The exemplary end of the savage Zulqader Khan Dalcha, along with his cavalry of 70,000 terrorizing soldiers, was the result of combined endeavors and joint strategies. Dalcha Zulqader Khan had unleashed monstrous terror upon the people of Cashmere, and the victories of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen brought an end to this tyranny.

The Emperor of Cashmere, Suha Deva—a close blood relation of Sultana Kota Rani—had already fled, and Prime Minister Ramachandra was half-dead in jail as a result of a scuffle over treasure. Suha Deva, the last descendant of the Lohara dynasty, had escaped with the treasure to Paddar Kishtwar through the Panchal mountains. Even while escaping in haste, he had scattered and left behind various golden and bronze statues, which were loosely loaded on a caravan of asses and horses. One such precious statue was recently discovered during an excavation in Devsar Panchal, South Cashmere.

Sultana Kota Rani, being a true lover of Cashmere, was extremely annoyed not only with the greed of Emperor Suha Deva for abandoning his people during such a severe crisis but also with her own father, Ramachandra. Her disdain for Ramachandra was evident as he died in Inderkote jail amidst chaos and turmoil, having been placed there in severely injurious conditions. The history of Cashmere acclaims the patriotic roles of Rawan Chandra, Udhyadeva, and the noble Reshi princess, Sultana Kota Rani, for remaining steadfast as Cashmere warriors to face the invasion of Zulqader Khan.

Sultana Kota Rani, being a daughter of Cashmere, chose to defend its territory. She refused to escape or surrender and instead decided to protect the honor of the helpless people of Cashmere.

The most striking fact of history is that Sultana Kota Rani and Renchenshah, obsessed with the spirit of humanity, were more enthusiastic about sacrificing their lives to protect the lives and honor of the people of Cashmere. Rawan Chandra and Kota Rani awaited spiritual support to ensure that Cashmere's civilization would be saved by some divine power.

Sultan Renchenshah was shocked to witness the holocaust, devastation, and destruction of the beautiful kingdom of Cashmere committed by Dalcha Zulqader Khan, the grandson of Halaco Khan and Kublai Khan. The Mongol terror led by Dalcha took undue advantage of the unpreparedness of Suha Deva, the last Lohara king of Cashmere, who lacked the resolve and foresight to face external aggression due to his greed and shortsightedness.

Dalcha Zulqader Khan proved to be moregreedy than Ramachandra, the Prime Minister of Cashmere, and Suha Deva, the Emperor of Cashmere. Dalcha Zulju had heard of Suha Deva's possession of a vast treasure trove, including sapphires, gold, and jewels. Dalcha's primary purpose in attacking Cashmere was to loot this treasure. However, before Dalcha could seize the treasure, Suha Deva, after imprisoning his Prime Minister in critical condition, fled to Kishtwar through the Devsar Panchal mountainous range.

Kota Rani's determination to defend Cashmere, based on the spiritual and administrative vision of the hero of Cashmere, Lalitaditya Muktapada, and inspired newfound confidence among the people. The Lohara dynasty itself had an enviable track record of not only providing a well-established security shield to a 3 lakh square kilometer territory but also pouncing on enemies before they could inflict harm. The image of Cashmere in history was solidified when Sangramraja, the Reshi king, defeated the massive invading forces of Mahmud Ghaznavi under his command at Tosamaidan.

Sultana Kota Rani was aghast at the cowardice of her own father, Ramachandra, and the inefficiency and greed of Suha Deva, the last Lohara king, who refused her demand to save Cashmere from the Mongol terror and later settle their claims over Cashmere's treasure.

At such a critical juncture, the selfishness and cowardice of Ramachandra and Suha Deva proved disastrous for the people of Cashmere. Their escape with the treasure, leaving the people defenseless against Dalcha's terror, marked the darkest phase in Cashmere's history. The helpless people of Cashmere became victims of Dalcha's tyranny, rendered defenseless, while Sultana Kota Rani, a true patriotic ideologue, emerged as the only hope during this extreme crisis.

The escape of the king during a time when his leadership was most needed left Sultana Kota Rani, her brother, and the entire population to fend for themselves amidst such catastrophic circumstances. This unprecedented abandonment further compounded the devastation caused by Dalcha's invasion. The gap in the documentation of Cashmere's history, as noted by the passing of great scholars like Pandit Kalhana, extended until the period of Sultan Sikander Iconoclast.

In this bleak historical moment, Sultana Kota Rani's unwavering patriotism and commitment to defending Cashmere became an enduring symbol of resilience and hope for its people.

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22
CHAPTER

From Ganjan cave Devsar to Peer Panchal, Zulqader Khan launched search operation to capture King Suha Deove along treasures of Cashmere

Sultan Renchenshah proved to be a truly brave personality, and Sultana Kota Rani's invitation to him to rush to Cashmere and protect humanity yielded the most positive results for Cashmere. Sultan Renchenshah, along with a small contingent and the remaining Cashmere forces under the command of Kota Rani, pounced on the terror army of Dalcha, who were still indulging in raping Cashmere women and beheading newborn babies.

Sultan Renchenshah's offensive against the terror forces shocked Dalcha. When he heard about the arrival of the brave prince of Tibet, Sultan Renchenshah, in Cashmere, Dalcha realized that he could not face him. His goal in attacking Cashmere was not to conquer it but to loot Cashmere's treasure. Dalcha decided to follow Suha Deva, the fugitive king, up to Kishtiwar from the southern side, as he was afraid to face the prominent warrior of the time, Sultan Renchenshah, in Srinagar Pragana or the northern side of Cashmere. His main goal was to loot the Cashmere treasure, which Suha Deva had taken along with him. Dalcha swiftly proceeded along with his 70,000-strong terror cavalry towards the Devsar Panchal Mountains.

Sultana Kota Rani, after watching the swift action of Sultan Renchenshah, felt proud of him and satisfied with her decision to invite him from another part of Cashmere, Tibet, to rush and save his own Cashmere from terror. The people were also grateful to Sultan Renchenshah, who actually rescued them from the clutches of the monster.

After a series of triumphs by Renchenshah, Sultana Kota Rani found the spirit and valor of Lalta Datiya Muktapada and Sangram Raja in him. She offered to marry him as a gesture of Cashmere's gratitude to Sultan Renchenshah, who saved Cashmere. This offer was readily accepted, and both of them were tied in the bonds of marriage.

Sultan Renchenshah's vigorous campaign to punish the tormentors of Cashmere resulted in the miserable defeat of Dalcha Zulqader Khan. Dalcha had burnt thousands of holy manuscripts and books of knowledge. The natural annihilation of Dalcha Zulqader Khan, following the most efficient strategy of Sultan Renchenshah Gyalson, enhanced his love and popularity among the people of Cashmere.

Sultana Kota Rani was pleased to observe that the complete elimination of Zulqader Khan Dalcha occurred at Devsar near the Panchal mountains due to three important factors. The first was Dalcha's greed to track down Suha Deva, who had escaped from Cashmere along with a huge treasure. The second factor was the threat from Sultan Renchenshah, who had rushed from the Tibetan part of Cashmere to punish him for committing extreme human rights violations. The third factor was the revenge sought by innocent Cashmere prisoners, who sacrificed their lives by misleading Dalcha towards the stormy areas of the Panchal mountains, where his entire army was devoured by monstrous avalanches.

The people of Cashmere had always remained loyal to their land. The prisoners, being locals, could assess that huge avalanches from the Panchal mountains would devour them as well, along with the cavalry of 70,000 terror forces. However, obsessed with the zeal to avenge what Dalcha had done to them and their families, they preferred to die and give a sense of victory to the people of Cashmere.

Taking command of Cashmere affairs during such a crisis was not an ordinary assignment. Cashmere was in shambles and in the most agonizing condition. The sagacious strategy of Sultana Kota Rani, Sultan Renchenshah, and Rawanchandra to make Dalcha retreat towards southern Cashmere rather than take the exit route through northern Tosamaidan yielded effective results. The snowstorm destroyed Dalcha's entire army, and they were all buried under horrible avalanches. History will always remember the sacrifices of those

Cashmere prisoners whose souls found contentment witnessing, before their own deaths, how Dalcha and his terror soldiers vanished.

The present discoveries made by archaeological surveys testify that the treasure of Cashmere was looted by Suha Deva while escaping from Cashmere. The site at Devsar, where some of the precious statues from the treasure were recently excavated, still exists. The dangerous pass of Panchal became a death trap for Dalcha, similar to how the Wadi Khayef between Madina and Makkah became a death trap for the huge army of Abraha, who had come to demolish the Kaaba during Abu Mutalib's period in Makkah. When Abraha approached near the holy Kaaba, his terror army was destroyed by birds. Similarly, in Cashmere, Dalcha met the same fate. The Devsar incident also strengthened the faith of the people in the Sufi saint who ensured communal unity in Cashmere.

The sagacious and strategic leadership of Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Renchenshah during that critical period in Cashmere's history received great acceptance among the masses. Their combined strategy ensured the complete elimination of Dalcha Zulqader Khan.

The decision of Sultana Kota Rani to invite the Tibetan prince to save Cashmere yielded the most positive results for the region. Sultan Renchenshah was brave, bold, and people-friendly, being a scholar of high stature. His campaign against the terror of Zulqader Khan made him very popular in Cashmere. G. M. D. Sufi, in his book *Kashier*, page 119, referred to Renchan as Renzushah due to his Shahnxi Renzu mountain connection and also titled Sultan Sader ud Deen as the "Lion of Cashmere," highlighting his triumphs. Sultan Renchenshah was praised not only for saving the honor and lives of the people of Cashmere but also for creating an effective strategy that led to the permanent elimination of Dalcha's terror.

Sultana Kota Rani, impressed by the warriorship and bravery of Sultan Renchenshah, offered herself to the young prince for marriage, which Renchenshah gladly accepted. Her desire to marry Sultan Renchenshah had been evident when she first received him at Khanjreeb Pass. She recalled how Sultan Renchenshah had gifted her his personal jewel-handled Khanjar (dagger) for self-protection and security.

It was not only Sultana Kota Rani's personal desire but also the collective wish of the people of Cashmere to rebuild the region back to its original glory by making Sultan Renchenshah the king of Cashmere. Accordingly, Sultana Kota Rani became the Reshi Queen of Cashmere, and her brother was appointed as the defense minister in the court of the new king of Cashmere, Sultan Renchenshah.

The zeal and determination of Sultan Renchenshah to defend Cashmere by fighting against the terror of Dalcha Zulqader Khan was observed by everyone. Authentic historian G. M. D. Sufi titled his valor by calling him the "Lion of Cashmere."

The people of Cashmere treated him and Sultana Kota Rani with the utmost respect, reverence, and honor. Sultana Kota Rani, the most beautiful, brave, and intellectual daughter of the high Reshi dynasty of Cashmere connected with the Kashab Reshi line, decided to marry Sultan Renchenshah, the new king of Cashmere. Kota Rani's brother, Rawanchandra, who in some sources is referred to as Udhay Deva, was made the minister second in command in King Renchenshah's court.

Cashmere's history bears witness that after the catastrophic devastation caused by the terror of Mongol forces, the leadership team chosen to take over the affairs of Cashmere provided honest, pure, and dedicated service. The entire team made a unanimous decision to prioritize reviving the Reshi and spiritual atmosphere of Cashmere, which had always found a respectable place in the region.

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23
CHAPTER

Sufi Reshi Saint Hazrat Bulbul Shah proved harbinger of spiritual transformation in Cashmere.

Sultana Kota Rani had studied at Sharda Peeth various chronicles of ancient Sufi traditions from China, India, Central Asia, Khurasan, and Baghdad. The sudden arrival of a Sufi saint, similar to the Reshi saints of Kashmir, proved to be the harbinger of a spiritual revolution in Kashmir. This prominent Sufi saint was the great Hazrat Abdul Rahman Sharaf-ud-Deen Bulbulshah, having a rich spiritual background rooted in Khurasan.

It was early morning when the first glittering ray of light struck the golden window panes of the palace on the shores of the Vitasta River. Inside, the Emperor of Kashmir, Sultan Renchanshah, and his Reshi Queen, Kota Rani, simultaneously started their morning prayers as usual. It was the time when darkness gave birth to light. Suddenly, they heard a mesmerizing and divine echo merging with the morning rays of light piercing through the dexterous window panes.

This echo was the first *Azaan* (call to prayer) of Hazrat Abdul Rahman Bulbulshah, emanating from the area of the Buddhist center Budh Gair, near the Bhairav Temple on the shores of the Vitasta River. The King and Queen felt a deep spiritual contentment and appeal in this divine echo. They decided to visit the spot and meet the person whose voice was so melodious and magnetic. They became enthusiastic about understanding the spiritual significance of this *Azaan*, which had never been heard before in Kashmir.

Reshi Queen Kota Rani had read about such divine echoes in various books, while Sultan Renchanshah recalled how often he had heard such echoes in the Shanzi mountains during his childhood visits with his father, Renchan Gyalson. Both the King and Queen became captivated by this divine voice, which was in the most melodious and captivating tune. They decided to visit the site in person to unravel the mystery of the sound that attracted them both.

Accompanied by a small group of guards, the royal couple arrived at the location in the vast lawns of the Bhairav Temple on the beautiful shores of the Vitasta River. There, they found a Reshi-styled saint, Hazrat Bulbulshah, fully engrossed in offering his *Namaz* (prayers). After concluding his prayers, Hazrat Bulbulshah welcomed the royal couple with full esteem. This impressed the King and Queen, marking the beginning of a new chapter of mutual respect for each other's faiths. This precious moment is considered the golden hour of Kashmir's spiritual history, fostering an understanding of faiths and their similarities through verses of knowledge exchanged between three important historical and spiritual personalities: Sultana Kota Rani, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, and Hazrat Bulbulshah. This historical trio transformed a fractured society, obsessed with contradictions and illusions, into one rooted in mutual love, unity, and brotherhood—a true symbol of a harmonious society.

Sultana Kota Rani invited the revered Sufi saint to the palace to learn about the *Namaz* he had offered and to know more about his religion. Sultan Renchanshah endorsed the invitation and expressed his personal desire to understand it further.

To fully appreciate this spiritual golden hour, when Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani met Hazrat Bulbulshah, it is necessary to discuss the ancestral background of Hazrat Bulbulshah alongside the spiritual histories of Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Renchanshah. The revered Sufi saint Hazrat Bulbulshah Turkistani Khurasani belonged to the Abdul Rahmani *Silsila*, connected with Abdul Rahman Abu Muslim of the 7th century.

The ancestral lineage of Hazrat Bulbulshah, dominated by the *Madhab-e-Hanafiya* of Hazrat Abu Hanifa, establishes the influence of Imam-e-Azam Abu Hanifa on Hazrat Abdul Rahman Abu Muslim. Abu Muslim, a distinguished figure in Khurasan's history, played a vital role in defeating the Banu Umayyad dynasty of Damascus on the River Zab in 750 AD. Hazrat Abu Hanifa (R.A.), Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq, and Hazrat Abdul Rahman Abu Muslim (R.A.) faced persecution for their strong beliefs in *Tasawuf* (spirituality). Tragically, they were martyred by the cruel Abbasid Caliph Abu Mansur.

From the 6th century to the 13th century, Khurasan adhered to the Sassani culture within Islamic *Tasawuf* parameters. The region included northeastern Iran, parts of Afghanistan, southern Central Asia (including Bukhara, Samarkand, Uzbekistan, Sistan, and Turkmenistan), and extended to the Indus Valley civilization. Prominent kingdoms like Kashmir and Kashgaria were neighboring regions.

Hazrat Bulbulshah, born in the Abdul Rahman family of Nishapur in the 13th century, later shifted to Turkistan. He carried a rich background of spiritual and Sufi orders. He informed Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani about doctrines of Imam-e-Azam Abu Hanifa and various Sufi orders prevalent in Khurasan, Baghdad, and beyond, including the Khwajgan, Suhrawardi, Qadriya, Kubrawiya, Naqshbandiya, and Reshi orders.

During this precious period of Kashmir's history, the trio—Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, Sultana Kota Rani, and Hazrat Bulbulshah—worked not only for spiritual harmony but also for territorial integrity. The territory of Kashmir at the time extended over 400,000 square kilometers, including regions such as Kashgar, Kohistan, Hunza Valley, Gilgit, Baltistan, and beyond.

Today, Hazrat Bulbulshah's shrine echoes his spiritual dream, where he foresaw the King and Queen of Kashmir embracing his faith as part of his mission. This vision not only transformed the life of the saint but also enriched the valley of Kashmir, making it a global symbol of love and brotherhood.

Sultana Kota Rani, a Reshi herself, encouraged free *langars* (community kitchens) at Reshi *saraais* (resting places). Inspired by traditions of Khurasan and Turkistan, Hazrat Bulbulshah continued the concept of *langars*, providing food to the poor through the *khankahs* (spiritual centers). These traditions enriched Kashmir's spiritual and social fabric.

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24
CHAPTER

Bestowing empirical titles of Sultan and Sultana to King and Queen of Cashmere denotes synergy of civilizational unity

The Sultanate period started in Kashmir immediately after Sultan Rinchenshah and Sultana Kota Rani put their hands simultaneously on the hand of Hazrat Bulbulshah. It was an intellectual transformation following several days of interactions on the contemporary faiths of all three revered personalities of Kashmir.

The spiritual trio came to the conclusion that Sufi orders and Reshi orders are synonymous. These Sufi foundations glorified the message of peace in Kashmir and gave new life to the Reshi culture of the region. These orders were based on peace and tranquility. They were clear in expressing their disdain against wars, which all Sufi orders believed were against the culture of Kashmir. This ideology strengthened the spirit of defending Kashmir from any offensive, as the trio had succeeded against Zulqader Khan's terror.

Hazrat Bulbulshah titled Rinchenshah as Sultan and added "Deen" to his name in the style of his own name, Sharaf-ud-Deen. This completed Rinchenshah's full name after his conversion to Islam as Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Rinchenshah. This also connoted his position as the president of Sufi Tasawwuf Fiqh in Kashmir. Accordingly, his wife, Kota Rani, became Sultana.

It is a matter of great appreciation that both Hindus and Muslims regard the strong, pious character of Sultana Kota Rani, who was forced to defend her purity by stabbing herself on her wedding bed. However, radical Islamists and some biased historians try to eclipse the reasons behind Sultana Kota Rani's forced suicide, orchestrated by Shams Swati.

The self-sacrifice of Sultana Kota Rani exposes all the conspiracies of Shams Swati, who was responsible for the assassination of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and the coup against Queen Sultana Kota Rani in the most brazen manner.

The bravery of Reshi Queen Sultana Kota Rani, who stood like a rock to protect Kashmir from complete collapse, is widely acknowledged. The new kingdom led by Sultan Sader-ud-Deen (Rinchenshah) was purely an intellectual and spiritual transformation, as Hazrat Bulbulshah R.A. himself referred to him as the "Sader" (President) of Sufi faith in Kashmir under the Hanafi Mazhab.

The surrounding mountains, which guard Kashmir, have deeply influenced its culture and affinities. Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Rinchenshah hailed from the Shanxi mountains, known as Ren mountains, which merged spiritually with the Kashmir mountains. The Shanxi mountain is directly connected with the ancient Ren philosophy of Confucius, based on humanity and love for all. These mountains are still called Renzu mountains, whose archaeological position, beauty, and staircases resemble those of Takht-e-Sulaiman mountain in Kashmir.

Sultana Kota Rani had studied books in Sharda Peeth about the historical and cultural significance of Shanxi's Yellow River, which literally means "ancestors of humans." The name Shanzi and Ren mountains were chosen because locals believed the mountain provided a home for Fuxi and Nuwa. The description of Nuwa corresponds to Hazrat Nuh (Noah) in Islam, leading to the belief that the shrine at Shanxi's holy mountains is that of Hazrat Nuh. However, Chinese documented mythology describes the shrine as built by legendary ancestors Fuxi and Nuwa on the Renzu mountains of Shanxi's Yellow River to honor Nuh.

The high vision of the Sufi order and the deep knowledge of Confucianism were always acknowledged in Arabia, Rome, Byzantium, India, and the Western world. In Kashmir, from the earliest human period (Manaw Tuwa), Islamic texts reveal that Hawah, the wife of the first human Adam, first appeared in the land of Hind (India). This Reshi order concept provided a protective shield for the people of

Kashmir. The voluntary endeavor of Kashyap Reshi to eliminate Jalodhbhava Deva and save humanity has become an undeniable preamble to Kashmir's origin.

The Jalodhbhava Deva, described as a monstrous dragon hiding in the seven lakes (Satisar) of Kashmir, vanished after the Baramulla pass was opened. Since Kashyap Reshi's time, Kashmir has been celebrated in ancient Hindu texts as a celestial realm inhabited by divine beings, celestial nymphs, and heavenly flora painting the landscape with ethereal beauty.

The similarities in the existence and emergence of humanity from caves, whether in the cave temples and shrine of Hazrat Nuh on the Ren mountains of Shanxi or the caves of Kashmir before the arrival of Hazrat Bulbulshah, are not just geographic facts. They indicate spiritual relationships among various ancestral faiths. Shankaracharya Hill (Takht-e-Sulaiman) is part of this chain, where faiths merge with one another. Reshis and Sufis shared the practice of meditating inside caves to pray for human protection.

The Nowha shrine of Shanxi, with its 265 stairs leading to the mountain's heights, bears similarities to Hazrat Nuh’s story. In China, the spiritual figure Nowha is described as a female entity, while Hindu scriptures attribute the same role to Manu or Oom. These narratives emphasize human love, which is a cornerstone of Sufi orders and meditations performed by Kashmir’s Sufi saints since ancient times.

The ancient Buddhist sutras of Tibet and China also emphasize meditation in Kashmir's caves, harmonizing with Hindu Reshi traditions since Kashyap Reshi's time and Muslim Sufi practices.

Buddhist sutras and ancient Chinese texts reveal that Nuwa, the mother goddess in Chinese mythology, is revered as the creator of human beings. Excavations in Shanzi, Harwan, Hari Chandan, Shankaracharya Hill, Mahadev, and other sites unearthed tiles and artifacts resembling each other, indicating a transitional period between the Old and New Stone Ages (100,000–80,000 years ago).

The Ren mountains of Shanxi cover 203 square kilometers. The scenic Nowha mountain, part of the Ren range, includes a peak rising over

1,700 meters and ancient buildings. Its core area, a scenic spot of 45 square kilometers, resembles the mountainous terrains of Amarnath, Mahadev, Zabarwan, and Takht-e-Sulaiman in Kashmir. The shrine complex at Shanxi includes the main hall dedicated to Nuwa and a side hall for Fuxi. Built during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the shrine hosts annual ceremonies on the 18th lunar day, attracting tens of thousands of visitors.

Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen implemented Sufi doctrines in Kashmir. Spirituality played a pivotal role when Kashmir was on the brink of collapse. Devotees of Hazrat Bulbulshah believe that Sultan Rinchenshah saw a vision of the great prophet advising him to reach Kashmir to protect its people. He was instructed to place his trust and respect in the hands of a spiritual saint.

The Rishi Queen Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Rinchenshah jointly built a holy Khanqah for Hazrat Bulbulshah near Bhairo Temple on the banks of the Vitasta (Jhelum). They also constructed a Reshi order Langer-Khana (community kitchen) called Bulbul Langar, which fed the poor twice daily. A mosque, referred to in historical texts as Jamia Awal, was built near the hospice by Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Rinchenshah, where he offered congregational prayers.

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25
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's congruity to make composit spirituality as constituent script of Cashmeri history had futuristic ramifications

Sultana Kota Rani might have studied Kalhana's handwritten chronicle records in Sharda Peeth up to Simha Deva's times. Therefore, she might have been aware of the entire political and administrative history of Kashmir from Hindu and Buddhist scholars' points of view. In various chapters of my present book, I have presented Sultana Kota Rani's multi-dimensional profiles. We have written about pre- and post-Reshi orders related to Sultana Kota Rani. Similarly, historical perceptions mainly described in various Rajataranginis are worth elaborating upon in relation to Kota Rani.

Dr. Aurel Stein translated Kalhana's chronicle after several centuries in the 19th century with his own elaborations and inclusion of subsequent events after Kalhana's death. The chronicle of Pandit Kalhana, published for the present generation, came after a prolonged gap of five to six centuries. It included additions and descriptions of certain events made by Jonaraja, which made it elaborate but not focused on each occurrence.

The *Waves of Kings*, titled in its original Sanskrit name *Rajatarangini*, was published in Europe. Kalhana, the author, began documenting his chronicle during the Lohara dynasty and completed it during the same era. Kalhana died before the end of Simha Deva's era in Kashmir, and no reliable narrator was a witness to the invasion of the Mongols and their unprecedented cruelties on the people of Kashmir, including Hindus, Buddhists, and neo-Muslims. It is not clearly documented by Dr. Aurel Stein whether Kalhana's demise had any relation to the political upheaval in Kashmir. Did he also fall victim to Mongol terror, or did he die of natural causes? This needs further research in light of the savage invasion of the Mongols, which has not been fully explored to uncover the fate of thousands of Reshis, scholars, and historians of that time.

The most tragic period of history, from the Tatar invasion led by Zulqader Khan Dalcha in Kashmir to the period of Sultan Sikander Iconoclast, has not been fairly presented due to communal, regional, and ethnic bias. Arab and Persian historians, unfamiliar with Kashmir and the Sanskrit language, focused more on subsequent events than delving into Kashmir's ancient past.

Authentic history has not been written by any individual who claimed to be an eyewitness like Kalhana, who documented many events during the Lohara dynasty. Therefore, references to this gap have been researched through contemporary sources of the pre- and post-Sultana Kota Rani period. Circumstantial evidence and descriptions of various characters active during that era have been developed into presentations of each event and situation based on research and analysis.

Sultana Kota Rani saved and ruled Kashmir in the early 14th century, while Jonaraja was born several decades later during Sultan Sikander's period. Jonaraja's *Rajatarangini* is authentic regarding the era he witnessed but lacks focus on the turmoil of earlier periods. In comparison, Kalhana focused on major events such as a disastrous earthquake during his lifetime and the unprecedented flood of the 8th century that drowned the entire Bijbehara city. He identified the mystic engineer Soyya, who placed gold coins in Sopore Dam to help recede the floodwaters. Such focused narratives are missing in accounts of the Mongol invasion.

Presumptive and biased accounts published centuries later do not hold ground. Comparative historical records from Greek, Buddhist, and Hindu sources have been deliberately ignored, obscuring facts about the spiritual and administrative transitions of 1320 A.D., which marked a spiritual and Cultural Revolution.

Even the 19th-century translation of the *Rajatarangini* fails to mention Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim references and historical documentation from 1300 A.D. to 1390 A.D. Subsequent research by Jonaraja is limited to his personal observations. He did not compare emerging philosophies in neighboring regions.

Sultana Kota Rani has been prominently mentioned in *Tareekh-e-Hassan* by Hassan Shah Kohami, Azam Daed Mari, G.M.D. Sufi, and Malik Chadora as a noble queen of Kashmir. These works detail her role in protecting Kashmir from Mongol terror with the support of Sultan Rinchan Shah, whom she married. These sources also reference the arrival of Hazrat Bulbul Shah and the conversion of Sultan Sadr-ud-Din Rinchan Shah to Islam.

No credible historian or author was alive during this sensitive historical phase, marked by ideological and cultural shifts in Kashmir. The slaughter of thousands of Reshi scholars by the Mongols erased records of atrocities, including the ripping of human bodies and the horrifying treatment of pregnant women.

Jonaraja, the author of the second phase of the *Rajatarangini*, belonged to the era of Sultan Sikander, which was rife with communal hatred. He primarily concentrated on the Sultan Sikander and Zain-ul-Abideen periods, as he served as an official historian in their courts. His works were guarded in their observations. For instance, he wrote illogical and biased accounts of ideological interactions between Sultan Sadr-ud-Din and Shaiva Guru Devaswami, portraying the latter in a poor light. However, the ideological debates based on Hindu and Buddhist rivalries in Kashmir cannot be reduced to the attitude of a single temple head like Devaswami. It is implausible that a minor priest could openly oppose a sovereign ruler like Rinchan Shah.

The communal hatred in Kashmir has often been presented illogically and contradictorily by modern narrators. Mr. Ishaq Rafiqi, a distinguished historian and head of the Department of History at Kashmir University, has written extensively to contradict such irresponsible narratives. In his book, published by City Publications, Rafiqi authoritatively refuted claims of inter-religious biases. He documented that Sultan Sadr-ud-Din, the king of Kashmir, married Sultana Kota Rani, the daughter of Ramachandra.

As mentioned earlier, Sultana Kota Rani was allergic to her father's greedy policies. When Suha Deva fled with the kingdom's treasure, he ensured Ramachandra's arrest and imprisonment in Inderkote. Despite being her father, Kota Rani did not intervene to release him, reflecting her unwavering patriotism for Kashmir.

Dr. Rafiqi further argued that if the knowledgeable and powerful Sultan Rinchan Shah had desired a meeting with Devaswami or any other Hindu or Buddhist scholar, he could have summoned them to his court. Rinchan Shah, influenced by the humanistic values of the Sufi saint Hazrat Bulbul Shah, voluntarily converted to Islam, a moment that marks the golden history of Kashmir.

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26
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's respect for Bulbulshah, Abdul Qadir Jeelani, Abu ul Hassan Shazli, Ibn e Arabi, paved way for heterogenious philosophy

Sultana Kota Rani's perception of the *tareeqat* of *Tasawuf* and *tareeqat* of *Reshiyat* in Cashmere, with respect to meditation, gained further enrichment under the spiritual influence of Hazrat Bulbulshah. Even the *Ren* and *Chan* philosophy of Buddhist thought was a *tareeqat* of *roohaniyat*. These two *tareeqats* were equipped with a strong element of human power as propounded by Confucius, which was essential for peace and love.

Sultana Kota Rani acknowledged the great knowledge of Sufi *Tasawuf* transmitted through spiritual voyages and communications from Khurasan and Turkistan to Cashmere by Hazrat Bulbulshah. Even the ancestor of Hazrat Abdul Rahman Abu Musalim, who served as a strong governor of Khurasan from 740 A.D. to 755 A.D., contributed immensely to these spiritual orders. During that period, Nishapur, Turkistan, Bukhara, Baghdad, Uzbekistan, and Samarkand had become the epitome of Sufi orders.

The Sufi orders of *Fana*, *Baqa*, *Shaziliya* of Imam Abu Hassan Shazli, *Tawakal*, *Karaamat*, *Hikmat*, *Wajood*, *Ma'arifat*, and *Qayas* were encyclopedias of knowledge. Enriched from the 8th century to the 14th century, Hazrat Bulbulshah's family—bearing the honorable ancestral title of Abdul Rahman—contributed greatly to these spiritual orders.

Since childhood, Sultana Kota Rani had studied in Sharda Peath the evolution of various Sufi streams not only in China, Central Asia, and Persia but also in Khurasan, which had emerged as the epitome of *Tasawuf*, similar to *Reshiyat*, from the 6th century onward.

Hazrat Bulbulshah was a well-learned priest familiar with the Qadriya Sufi order as well as the Yasawee order. He was personally influenced by the Qadriya *silsila* of Abdul Qader Jeelani, the Shazliya *silsila* of Hazrat Imam Abu Hassan Shazli of Egypt and Morocco, and Imam Mohideen Ibn-e-Arabi of Andalusia, a close associate of Imam Abdul Hassan Shazli.

Through the verses of Hazrat Dastageer Abdul Qadir Jeelani, the book *Wahdat-ul-Wajood* by his disciple Hazrat Mohideen Ibn-e-Arabi, the Shazliya Hanafi Sufi *tareeqat* of Abul Hassan Shazli, *Deewan-e-Hikmat* of Khwajah Yaswee, Suharawardi and Kubrawayi *tareeqats*, and the jurisprudence of Hazrat Imam-e-Azam Abu Hanifa, Hazrat Bulbulshah introduced the King and Queen of Cashmere to the new dimensions of humanity, spirituality, and the relationship of the soul with Allah.

Sultan Renchanshah, too, came from a high-order Buddhist family of knowledge. He held the titles of *Ren* and *Chan*, which were the most honorable statuses in Buddhism. As such, he found Sufi philosophy to be highly enriching for his knowledge and faith.

This became even more significant during the year 1320 A.D. when Zulqader Khan Dalcha beheaded not only Hindu Reshies but also many distinguished Buddhist scholars. These faithless Mongols, whose worship was rooted in violence and who denied the existence of God, made Kashmiris strongly averse to the concept of faithlessness. Rather, it further strengthened the resolve of Reshi and Buddhist scholars in Cashmere to promote a renaissance of faiths within the framework of spiritual orders.

During a series of interactive debates on all forms of Sufi orders, the relationship between Confucius' concept of *Ren*—a symbol of humanity—and the *Wahdat-ul-Wajood* of Hazrat Ibn-e-Arabi deeply impressed Sultan Renchanshah.

Sultana Kota Rani, Reshi priests, learned scholars, and Sultan Renchanshah, unanimously acknowledged as the Triumphant King of Cashmere, became symbols of human love. They had engaged with the content of all Sufi orders from Khurasan, Baghdad, Nishapur, Egypt, and Persia, finding connectivity with the Shahnxi Ren mountains of Nowha and other such traditions. Thus, both Sultan Renchanshah and Sultana Kota Rani came under the spiritual influence of the great Sufi saint Hazrat Sharaf-ud-Deen Abdul Rahmaan Bulbulshah.

In the critical year of 1320 A.D., the conversion of the King from another faith to Islam marked a significant moment in the spiritual history of the world. A voluntary conversion of faith by a king through intellectual debate and discourse was unprecedented.

Sultana Kota Rani recognized the difference between Mohammad Bin Qasim's violent attack on Sindh—similar to Zulqader Khan's methods—and the intellectual exchange of *Tasawuf* thoughts with Bulbulshah. She was extremely pleased when Bulbulshah approved of her Reshi approach as a valid path of *Tasawuf*. The conversion of Hazrat Sader-ud-Deen Renchanshah to Islam, with respect to humanity's protection in Cashmere, was thus a monumental occurrence.

In Cashmere, Sufi orders significantly influenced people because of their humanitarian appeal. This appeal was so effective that it attracted not only the King and Sultana Kota Rani but also resonated through open debates on faith and the supremacy of God, on which all three agreed.

Accordingly, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchanshah adopted Islam under the spiritual command of Bulbulshah. Sultana Kota Rani, the historically prominent and dignified Rishi Queen of Cashmere, requested that her spiritual connection to the first Reshies of Cashmere, tracing back to Kashab Reshi, be acknowledged. Hazrat Bulbulshah, under the doctrines of *Uruf* in Sufism, not only allowed her to retain the features of *Rishiyat* but also made it an integral part of the composite spiritual culture of Cashmere.

Kota Rani's Reshi doctrines fall under the doctrine of *Uruf*, which recognizes local traditions. Hazrat Bulbulshah inculcated his Sufi orders in Cashmere within the Hanafi doctrines of Imam-e-Azam Abu Hanifa R.T., who allowed the inclusion of local traditions and composite cultures within *Shariyat*. As a result, Sufi orders were immediately accepted in Cashmere. The traditions and culture of

Cashmere never accommodated radical provisions of any faith. The strict *sharia* order imposing *Jazia* on non-Muslims and treating them as inferior was never adopted except during Sikander Butshikan's time.

The Khurasan revolt against the Umayyads in 750 A.D., led by Hazrat Abdul Rahman Abu Musalim R.T., was a declaration of humanity against cruelty, which brought an end to Umayyad rule in Damascus, Khurasan, Nishapur, and Baghdad. It also gave rise to the highest quality of Sufi orders during that period, particularly as these orders received the patronage of all five *Fiqh* Imams.

The chronicles of Khurasan also mention the daily visits of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal to various Sufi saints in Nishapur, highlighting the deep spiritual connections of that time.

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27

CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani resisted inexorable invasion of radical ideologies with the instrument of joint spiritual empowerment

While Zulqadar Khan's invasion marked the entry of exterior terror piercing through the borders of Cashmere, there are hundreds of instances recorded in chronicles, sutras, and references where various kings and queens attempted to suppress the spiritual freedom of Cashmere through instruments of terror. In ancient times, there is an abundance of examples where various groups and sections demolished each other's places of worship.

Mihran Gulla or Kulla Hoon has attained the position of an extremist terrorist king in Cashmere. Sometimes referred to as Mihiragula or Mahiragula, he was the second and last Alchon Hoon ruler between 502 and 530 CE. He was a son and successor to Toramana of Hoona heritage. Mihirakula ruled from his capital and brutally killed many top Buddhist scholars of Cashmere, whose chronicles are still famous among Buddhists in China and Tibet. Mihran Gulla would reportedly find sound sleep only with the groaning of elephants as they were rolled to their deaths from mountain tops.

Mihran Gulla was a king of destruction who destroyed Buddhist vihars on Harwan and Mahadev mountains in Srinagar. He was greedy and lustful, infamous for raping one virgin daily and then killing her. Sultana Kota Rani repeatedly accused Suha Devo and her own father, Ramachandran, of following Mihrangulla's greed for the treasures of Cashmere. She also referred to the corrupt and violent practices of Harsha (1089–1101 A.D.) and Sussala (1111–1128 A.D.) as being responsible for the destruction of Cashmere's ethos, unity, and secularism.

Harsha is infamous for converting golden statues into personal treasures. During their own reigns, both Harsha and Sussala demolished and controlled each other's places of worship, including temples and vihars.

The love for Cashmere attracted Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah and his noble Queen, Sultana Kota Rani, towards Hazrat Bulbulshah. His Sufi orders played a more positive and intellectual role in helping the people of Cashmere understand new doctrines of faith and their spiritual appeal. As a result, there was a very rapid mass conversion.

Historical records bear witness to the fact that conversions of faith in Cashmere were very smooth, and the elite led the way. The people of Cashmere, particularly right-thinking Kashmiris, found it easy to embrace Sufi Islam because the sovereign Sultan of Cashmere fully endorsed and recognized the message of mutual love and brotherhood that dominated Sufi versions and Sufi Hikmat.

There is no parallel in the world to how Sufi faiths merged with each other. The transformation of faith in Cashmere through intellectual discourses was a defeat to the communist, non-believing Tartar Mongol terror.

To counter the role of terror in faiths, the historical trio of Cashmere during that period prohibited the use of any coercive methods or promulgation for any forcible conversions, unlike what was done by Suha Batta and Sultan Sikander in Cashmere during subsequent centuries.

During Bulbulshah and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen's period, Reshies remained proudly steadfast and decided to retain their age-old Reshi practices and their own tareeqat of worship according to their traditions. Both the Sultan and Sultana of the time, along with their Murshid, Hazrat Bulbulshah, gave them full support.

The khankah of Bulbulshah, built in the Reshi style of Cashmere, was placed on the shores of Vitasta (Jehlum), near the old Bheroe Temple of the 8th century. It was constructed as a house for Attri Gupta near the biggest heritage Buddhist Vihar, Budh Gear. Chanting prayers in similar fashion in vihars, temples, and mosques with loud choruses made faith in Cashmere more competitive, urging people to draw closer to God by doing good deeds and staying away from sins. This not only created a heterogeneous society of faiths but also strengthened the esteem for each other's beliefs, receiving sovereign patronage and strength.

Uruf was such a great doctrine in Imam Abu Hanifa's books that it allowed Cashmere traditions to be part of Sharia. This popularized Hazrat Bulbulshah's Sufiyat, resembling the Reshiyat of Cashmere. Ishq-e-Rasool (SAW) was the most dominant feature of Bulbulshah's doctrines. The noor (divine light) of the great Prophet emerged from Noor-e-Allah, embodying love and loyalty for all Sufi Awliya.

The Reshi order, as well as the Sufi orders introduced by Hazrat Bulbulshah in Cashmere, gained automatic affinities and unanimous approvals. The verses of all Sufi faiths in Cashmere are living evidence of how people of Cashmere appreciated the coexistence of various faiths. This strengthened the combined moral character of the joint civilization and rejected elements of radical terror in faiths.

The campaign against violence and terror, initially launched by Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah against Mongol terror, was endorsed by Hazrat Bulbulshah. It is significant to understand that the conversions were not influenced by any external aggression but were a befitting response to the violence and disaster caused by Mongol terror under Dalcha Zulju in Cashmere.

The Mongol terror forces were miraculously buried under snow avalanches in Banihal Pass, and all faiths considered it a triumph of joint spirituality. The unification of several faiths under one umbrella against Dalcha Zulju and Zulqadar Khan was another important achievement of Hazrat Bulbulshah's timely spiritual guidance, suggested by the Sultan and Sultana of Cashmere.

On Reshi land, the vision of Wahdat-ul-Wajood by Ibn-e-Arabi, doctrines of Imam Azam, poetic verses of Gous-ul-Azam, the Shazliya Silsila of Imam Abu-ul-Hassan Shazli, and the verses of Kazakhstani and Khurasani Sufi saints received a most positive response from the people of faith. Bulbulshah preached Hikmat (spiritual content) through

Sufi verses filled with Darood, praising Prophet Rasool Akram (peace be upon him).

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28
CHAPTER

Significance of construction of Khankah on shores of Vitasta by Sultan & Sultana of Cashmere

The great triumphant and proud icon of Cashmere victories, Adi Lalitaditya Muktapada, had made Cashmere the most mystic and spiritual abode for his spiritual Guru, Attri Gupta, on the shores of Vitasta. The miracle of the vision of composite culture and Sufi Reshiyat was such that Hazrat Bulbulshah selected the same vicinity as the resting place for his spirituality when he reached Cashmere.

Attri Gupta's miracle in Cashmere also included the flow of Gupt Ganga from the Buddhist mountain, Hari Chandran. The area from Harwan to Zabarwan Hills is attributed to the same Attri Gupta. This 7th-century house was later transformed into the Bheroe Temple on the shores of Vitasta. Coincidentally, Hazrat Bulbulshah selected his spot a few yards away from this location. This spot became an important historical and spiritual place where the royal couple came to him and placed their hands on his as a mark of spiritual Baiet (endorsement).

The way Lalitaditya Muktapada honored his spiritual Guru, Attri Gupta, and Shankaracharya, as narrated by Sultana Kota Rani to Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, he too gave similar esteem to his spiritual Murshid. Immediately after merging their Sufi ideologies with those of Hazrat Bulbulshah, both Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani selected the same shores of Vitasta where Lalitaditya Muktapada had established a house for Attri Gupta for the Sufi meditation of Hazrat Bulbulshah.

Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen jointly constructed a Khanqah and a free Langar (kitchen) in the style of Khurasan langars of Khurasan Sufi orders on the bank of the river Vitasta (Jehlum), now known as Bulbul Lankar, a few yards away from Bheroe Temple. Sultana Kota Rani also had the abode of Attri Gupta, which had become

Bheroe Temple, renovated. Although she did not fully join her husband, the Sultan of Cashmere, in building the Khanqah, she personally monitored the construction of the first mosque of Cashmere, known as Jamia Awal. This mosque was constructed near the Khanqah, where the king offered his congregational prayers five times a day, presided over by Hazrat Bulbulshah.

The Khanqah and mosque still exist near the centuries-old temple, which had remained the mystic abode of Attri Gupta during Lalitaditya's time. Jamia Awal was the first mosque ever built in Cashmere. A Langar (free kitchen) was also attached to the Khanqah and mosque, for the maintenance of which Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah assigned the revenues of a few villages. Sultana Kota Rani donated her blue sapphire necklace for its sustenance. Throughout the Sultanate period, the Khanqah, mosque, and Langar became the center for devotees.

Only a few months before Sultan Sader-ud-Deen was assassinated under a grand conspiracy by his minister, Shams Swati, Hazrat Bulbulshah had left this world. He passed away in 1323 A.D., on the midnight of 15 Shaban, while he was praying during Shab-e-Barat. He was buried in this Khanqah with royal protocol. Sovereign personalities, including Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, Rishi Queen Sultana Kota Rani, court members, and the entire population of Srinagar, belonging to all major communities—Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists—attended the funeral of Hazrat Bulbulshah (R.A.).

Sultana Kota Rani and her husband, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, jointly agreed with Hazrat Bulbulshah to honestly apply doctrines of equal justice for all subjects in Cashmere, irrespective of any discrimination. The kingdom laid stress on secular laws rather than radical deterrent laws. Other doctrines, within the parameters of all Sufi orders, were devised by Hazrat Bulbulshah, including suitable and fair codes of conduct for the kingdom. These included prohibitions on the use of wine, drugs, immoral activities, loot, atrocities, thefts, and the use of any force, coercion, or violence against any sect or faith.

29
CHAPTER

Imposition of incontrovertible joint doctrines of equal justice as fulcrum of State laws made Cashmere inclusive

The state laws of the Kingdom of Cashmere were evolved as the most secular laws rather than exclusive Shariati laws. The trio—Sultana Kota Rani, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, and Hazrat Bulbulshah—were united in their belief that any forcible application of Shariati laws over Hindus or Buddhists would imbalance Cashmere society.

Accordingly, the first Sufi King of Cashmere, Hazrat Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, never subjected any non-Muslim to the application of Sharia laws. This was in stark contrast to Sultan Sikander, who forcefully implemented Sharia during his rule, leading Cashmere society to catastrophe.

Sultana Kota Rani streamlined the management of justice so that the personal matters of non-Muslims could be settled according to their own religious laws. She preferred the application of Reshi practices to their personal affairs, particularly concerning marriages, succession, wills, religious institutions, and other matters. This approach ensured that every person felt satisfied and free of discrimination based on faith, community, or sect.

Sultana Kota Rani believed that the execution of justice was one of the principal duties of a ruler. Accordingly, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, on the advice of Hazrat Bulbulshah, was raised to the position of the deliverer of justice through the respective Deen (Madhab). While titling him as "Sader" (President) of Deen (Madhab), the holy saint Hazrat Bulbulshah strictly advised that if he ever turned away from the path of justice, he would be deprived of the right to call himself a rightful person with the title of Sader-ud-Deen. Sultana Kota Rani learned from Hazrat Bulbulshah how to make the lives of their subjects comfortable.

She believed that severe punishments should only be inflicted when necessary. Accordingly, she urged the Sultan to live strictly in accordance with the standard of living of his subjects and to make every effort to safeguard their interests. This approach was precisely aligned with Reshi chronicles.

From her childhood, Sultana Kota Rani believed in the doctrine of taking full care of the needs and requirements of all individuals, irrespective of discrimination. She emphasized that only after discharging this duty could a ruler justify their position. In matters of food and dress, she advocated for leaving the choice to the people, allowing them to eat and dress according to their traditions and practices without forcing anyone to abandon their culture. Through Hazrat Bulbulshah, she learned that Imam Abu Hanifa had also approved under *Uruf* that traditions and practices which are part of civilization need not be changed.

Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen were greatly impressed by the guidance of Hazrat Bulbulshah through his spiritual preaching and sermons. While explaining the code of conduct prescribed for the kingdom, Hazrat Bulbulshah emphasized the responsibility of implementing laws that respected the religious faiths of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in Cashmere. He strongly advocated that no one should ever be compelled to adopt traditions they were unfamiliar with. Sultana Kota Rani appreciated and supported Sultan Sader-ud-Deen's view that matters of faith between individuals should be disposed of based on their respective choices. Humanitarian laws and the provisions of their own faiths were applied to non-Muslims, ensuring equal rights to justice.

The Sultan, in his capacity as "Sader" (President) of Deen, was authorized to settle personal matters of Muslim subjects according to *Fiqh* doctrines. Meanwhile, Sultana Kota Rani, under the guidance of Hazrat Bulbulshah, was authorized to handle all traditional Reshi matters as per Reshi doctrines prevalent in Cashmere.

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30
CHAPTER

Cashmere evolved with unique cohesiveness of faiths under sagacity of Sultana Kota Rani

Politeness towards their own people, mitigating their problems and hardships, were mutual habits of both Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen. Their day-to-day orders were always honest and free of personal prejudices. Both believed in Sufi and Reshi doctrines, emphasizing that pleasing the Creator (God) would lead to the happiness of their subjects.

The philosophy of human love (*Ren*) was a foundational element of all Sufi orders. It focused on winning the hearts of the poor and weak by extending love, affection, and benevolence to them. Hazrat Bulbulshah advised both the Sultan and the Sultana to ensure that no cruel officer was appointed for tax or revenue collection. He also instructed that if dishonesty was proven against any officer, the kingdom's actions should be prompt and deterrent, ensuring the creation of an ideal civilization in Cashmere.

Both Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen possessed the wisdom to distinguish between right and wrong. They were intellectuals and scholars, capable of original initiatives rather than imitating others. However, they failed to identify the evil intentions of Shams Swati, their minister, who existed in their ranks disguised as a loyal subordinate, waiting for the right opportunity to strike.

Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Reshi Queen Sultana Kota Rani faithfully implemented the advice of their *Murshid*, Hazrat Bulbulshah, in daily administration. During Hazrat Bulbulshah's lifetime and after his death, they built a magnificent Khanqah in the Budh Gaer locality, now known as Aali Kadal. A footbridge in Nowa connected Attri Gupta's abode to the Khanqah on the opposite side of the Vitasta (Jehlum).

Interestingly, Lalitaditya Muktapada had also selected a nearby site on the shores of the Vitasta for his spiritual Guru, Attri Gupta. Out of respect for the teachings of Hazrat Bulbulshah, the Sultan and Sultana maintained the nearby Bharoe Temple, located a few yards away from the Khanqah, which had once been the abode of Attri Gupta.

The Khanqah of Bulbulshah was open to all, without any discrimination. This inclusivity was a novel experience for the caste-ridden society of the time. It is said that both the Sultan and the Sultana often visited Hazrat Bulbulshah to consult him on important religious and administrative matters.

The dedication of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah and Reshi Queen Sultana Kota Rani in building a rare and secular Khanqah for Hazrat Bulbulshah left an enduring legacy of unity in Cashmere society. Unfortunately, Suha Batta burned this rare edifice during the time of Sultan Sikander, who disapproved of the Khanqah's inclusivity and profile.

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31
CHAPTER

Assiduous handling of ascetic, Reshi, khufiya [Gupt] streams and treasure of Sutra's in Sharda Peath by Sultana Kota Rani proved exemplary in Cashmere

In the initial chapters of this book, while conducting research on the birth of Sultana Kota Rani, her studies in Sharda Peeth, and the arrival of Hazrat Bulbulshah to Cashmere, it became necessary to understand the origin of Sufism in Khurasan and its Sufi orders. These sacred orders emerged from Khurasan as early as the 7th century and spread worldwide, renowned for their universal appeal of human love and compassion.

The full moon during the longest day of the year, typically falling on June 21st, holds significance in Cashmere's calendar. It is indicated that Sultana Kota Rani was born on such a full moon night. Coincidentally, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen was visiting Srinagar on a similar full moon night when conspirators struck him with multiple sharp swords.

The significance of the full moon night also features in Cashmere folklore. On such a night, Sultana Kota Rani is said to have protected her purity by stabbing herself. The night when Sultan Sader-ud-Deen was martyred by conspirators was also a full moon night. Thus, the moon played a spiritually significant and predominant role in their lives.

Sultana Kota Rani frequently visited places mentioned in the *Neelmat Purana*, which still existed during her time. She believed that Cashmere was primarily a vast lake called Satisaras. According to the Purana, the draining of water from the lake and the killing of the demon Jallodbhava, born from the waters of Satisaras, were achieved through the strenuous efforts of Kashyapa with the help of Ananta wielding a deadly iron plough.

Sultana Kota Rani's Reshi instincts found a spiritual connection between the Reshi chronicles and the Sufi doctrines of Hazrat

Bulbulshah. According to various books, including one written by Kaing Ghulam Nabi and verses by Hanafi poet Farooq Nuqati, a devotee of Hazrat Bulbulshah, the saint also tamed various *jinn* who caused trouble in the river Vitasta. Hazrat Bulbulshah referred to the Vitasta as *Jahlum* (flowing glow) in Persian. The *jinn* or *devtas* mentioned in local Islamic literature resembled those tamed by Kashyapa Reshi inside Satisaras.

Sultana Kota Rani herself meditated according to Reshi practices on sacred *naags* and *nagins* (springs). She believed that *naagas* constituted the earliest inhabitants of Cashmere. The term *naaga* stands for spring or *cheshmah*, and *nagin* for smaller springs. According to the *Neelmat Purana*, *naagas* were said to reside in the lakes and springs of the valley. The predominant mode of the *Naaga Tareeqat* seemed to have been established in the valley from prehistoric times. This meditation technique was used to tame snakes and cobras, rendering them harmless and human-friendly.

Even in Harwan, on Maha Devoe Mountain, there is a vast cobra valley called Gunus Bal, where Reshi saints had made the fangs of cobras poison-free. This valley, known as Gunus Bal Valley, remains significant in Mahadeo.

The marks of Sultana Kota Rani meditating by Verinag, Anantnag, Sheshnag, Kausarnag, Nilanag, and other sacred springs show traces of such ancient Reshi beliefs. Sultana Kota Rani introduced a headgear called *Pooch*, which she tied on her head. When she heard about *Renpoochee*, she understood its symbolic meaning: a representation of pure thoughts concealed within the head. The *pooch* kept long hair twisted in a style resembling Mahadeo's hair, reaching down to the ankles.

This headgear, used by Sultana Kota Rani, was later adopted widely and became a symbol of purity and divine blessing. The design featured a snake-like head and body, with the tail touching the lower ankles. It became popularly known as *Pooch*, signifying purity and divine grace.

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32
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's vision of Revolution of Love was concomitant of her steadfast endeavors to enrich Cashmiriyat.

The deviation of Sultana Kota Rani's father, Ramachandra, and King Suha Devoe from the actual Reshi traditions of Cashmere led the valley to disaster. These deviations in the kingdom and society thereafter resulted in ideological tensions due to religious developments. These developments show continuity with succeeding centuries and can be reconstructed through religious texts, inscriptions, architecture, and sculptural remains.

Sultana Kota Rani personally witnessed the religio-political turbulence that prevailed during the reigns of Suha Devoe and Ramachandra. This period significantly weakened the social fabric of Cashmere. An important landmark during this time was the arrival of Hazrat Bulbulshah, whose enlightening Sufi thoughts enriched society. His influence shaped the pragmatic religio-political ideology of Sultana Kota Rani, which was critical for preserving the ancient civilization and existence of Cashmere.

Sultana Kota Rani harbored a deep yearning to realize her dream of a revolution of love in Cashmere. Along with her husband, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, she became one of the first individuals to adopt Reshi Islam under the guidance of Hazrat Bulbulshah. This is evident from the fact that Cashmeries never fully parted ways with their significant pre-Islamic Reshi traditions, including the Cashmere calendar, rituals, and traditional attire.

After extensive debate and discussions between Bulbulshah and Sultana Kota Rani, the practices were approved and justified under *Uruf* (customary law). This led to the enrichment of human ideologies, blending elements from the pre-Islamic era with the new Islamic framework, which was triumphantly achieved.

It is significant to note that Cashmere Muslims retained the elements of ancient indigenous Reshiyat. Critics often describe these practices as "saint and shrine worship" among the Muslims of Cashmere. However, the radical aspects of Islam were considered too abstract to fulfill their spiritual cravings.

When Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah adopted Islam through the Sufi and *Tasawuf* streams, it conveyed a profound spiritual message to the kingdom of Cashmere. This adoption provided convincing guidance to the population, who were at a crossroads of faith after enduring the catastrophic Mongol invasions.

Sultana Kota Rani, along with the ministerial elite and various administrative layers, embraced the Sufi doctrines preached by Hazrat Bulbulshah. These doctrines emphasized piety, truth, humanity, and mutual love, transcending all discrimination, class divisions, or regional, ethnic, and linguistic barriers.

The influence of original Cashmere practices (*Riwaj*) on their social life and thought remained strong and continued to coexist with their Islamic journey. While they celebrated Islamic festivals like Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Zuha, they also actively participated in traditional Cashmere festivals and spiritual days connected with the Cashmere calendar, such as Sounth, Haar, Grashim, and Nowroze.

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33
CHAPTER

Triumphs of Sultan's Kota Rani accompanied with her sway on Global Sufi ideologies made her demagogue of aspirations of Cashmere

Sultana Kota Rani's spiritual triumph lies in the fact that the social and religious transformation of the masses under the influence of Hazrat Bulbulshah was taking place. She received the endorsement of Reshi *Tareeqat* from Hazrat Bulbulshah. As a result of this approval, under the doctrines of *Uruf*, Lalleshwari, Nund Reshi, and Sayeed Ali Shah Hamdani R.A., in the same century, freely practiced *Sufiyat* and *Reshiyat* simultaneously without contradicting each other. Their efforts transformed the entire social order and marked a turning point in the history of Cashmere.

No doubt, many Reshi saints had existed since the Buddhist era, such as during Naga Arjun's time in Cashmere. However, they were an amalgamation of Hindu and Buddhist mythologies, which were later enriched with the universal humanistic vision of Hazrat Nuh and Hazrat Sulaiman's ideologies of ancient times.

During Sultana Kota Rani's era, a uniform spiritual chord was formally established between Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist ideologies. These bonds ensured that Cashmere's culture and spirituality remained vibrant forever. By researching these saints, one appreciates the visionary outlook of Sultana Kota Rani, who strongly believed that Cashmere would live for eternity, supported by Reshi and Sufi philosophy.

Lalleshwari was born during a period when Sultana Kota Rani's self-sacrifice left the people of Cashmere in extreme despair. Shams Swati tried to forcefully marry her, but she refused, staying loyal to her first husband, who had been martyred. From her childhood, Lalleshwari adhered to *Tasawuf* and Reshi norms. Her *Vakhs* (poetic verses) and rebellion against domestic atrocities against women elevated her to the status of a saintess.

Lalleshwari, also known as Lala Arifa and Lale-e-Didda, was young when Nund Reshi was born. Serious researchers find a unanimous thread of thought between Sultana Kota Rani, Lalleshwari, and Nund Reshi. Together, they are regarded as the founders of the spiritual Reshi cult of Cashmere and are equally loved and respected by both Hindu and Muslim communities. Hindus present them in their own historical framework, while Muslims revere them as icons of their heritage.

Many Hindu texts refer to Sheikh-ul-Aalam as Sahazanand, a Hindu name. This is a shortened form of "Sazzan," and he is frequently addressed as Nund Reshi. Similarly, Lalleshwari is considered a Hindu saintess, while Muslims call her Lala Arifa because of her reverence for Hazrat Bulbulshah's Reshi teachings in her youth and her respect for Hazrat Shah Hamdan in her later years. Sultana Kota Rani, Sheikh-ul-Aalam, and Lala Arifa (Lalleshwari) were products of a fusion between the indigenous Shaivism of Cashmere and the Sufism of Central Asia, Baghdad, and Khurasan.

For centuries, even before the era of Sultana Kota Rani, Cashmere was known as the abode of Rishis, long before the advent of Islam. It was referred to as *Rishi Vatika*. Folk stories like those of Sazanand Pandit, the snake emerging from the basket, and the narration of Aka Nandun reveal that the Sazanand were Reshi saints of Cashmere. A strong folk tradition still persists, particularly in several Cashmere villages, pointing to the existence of Rishis in ancient times.

The emergence of Sultana Kota Rani, Lalla Ded, and Nund Reshi as founders of an indigenous order of Rishi *Silsilah* established the social significance of the Reshi tradition for the first time in Cashmere's history. The most significant political power wielded by Sultana Kota Rani and her influence paved the way for Rishi orders to emerge as a vital social force. In various Hindu texts, this order has been equated with "a new Bhakti movement," which is said to have evolved from the Saivite mysticism of the fourteenth century.

34
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's self-Martyrdom coincides with birth of Laleshwari Lal Arifa in Cashmere

Sultana Kota Rani's studies at Sharda Peeth and her subsequent interactive sessions with Sufi saints establish that the Sufi ancestry did not hesitate to borrow ideas and practices from ascetics of other regions of the world. The Reshi emphasis on individual salvation and indifference to the fate of others elevated them to spiritual sacrifices of the highest order.

Sultana Kota Rani's self-martyrdom coincided with the birth of Lalleshwari (Lal Arifa) in Cashmere. The act of self-martyrdom, achieved by Sultana Kota Rani by taking her own life on her wedding bed with the dagger given to her by her loving husband Sultan Sader-ud-Din Renchenshah, indicates the fearlessness instilled by Reshi orders.

Sheikh-ul-Aalam Nund Reshi, the younger contemporary of Lalleshwari, was another prominent figure in Cashmere's spiritual heritage. Nund Reshi is popularly regarded as the successor or "spiritual son" of Lalleshwari.

Sultana Kota Rani died, and Lalleshwari was born in the same period. Both lived during a time of unprecedented political and social turmoil in the 14th century. Sultana Kota Rani bore witness to the arrival of Bulbulshah, while Lalleshwari witnessed the arrival of Shah Hamdan. The beauty of the Reshi order in Cashmere lies in its inclusiveness, as all Sufi saints and saintesses of Cashmere endorsed Reshi orders, which gave a distinguished role to women.

The political and social changes during their respective periods had no significant impact on either Sultana Kota Rani or Lalleshwari. While Sultana Kota Rani emerged as a rebellious Reshi Queen of Cashmere, Lalleshwari emerged as a rebellious saintess and spiritual poetess of Cashmere.

The legacy of Lalleshwari (Lal Ded or Lala Didda) in contemporary Cashmere literature remains strong. Her spiritual *Vakhs* are significant contributions to the new spiritual tradition. Both Sultana Kota Rani and Lalleshwari are considered to have been influenced by Mahayana Buddhism, Sufism, and *Tasawuf* orders of Muslim saints, as well as the ancient Reshi order. This cross-cultural fusion had a direct impact on their expressions, which are replete with syncretism.

The administrative impact of Sultana Kota Rani influenced Cashmere's polity for several centuries, while the verse-sayings of Lalleshwari became timeless and deeply embedded in Cashmere culture. Her devotional poetic compositions—called *vatsuns*, *vakhs*, or *Lalla-vakhs*, literally meaning "Lalla's speeches"—reflected the socio-political upheavals of Cashmere on one hand and her mystic experiences on the other. They demonstrated her poetic genius and compassionate outlook on human existence with its everyday hardships. She spread her message in the Kashmiri language, making it accessible to everyone, not just the privileged intellectual elite.

The mystic idea of divine unity, as practically adopted by Sultana Kota Rani, became an inspirational factor for both Lalleshwari and Nund Reshi. These three great practitioners of spirituality attracted people to a humanistic perception of religion, emphasizing equality and challenging social discrimination. They revolted against organized religion, which at the time was strictly tied to conservative ritualism and discrimination.

Their immense influence on shaping the collective identity and popular religious thought of Cashmere makes them the most important indigenous figures in the religio-cultural history of the region.

Sultana Kota Rani's emphasis on the Reshi Movement wielded considerable influence on the religious and philosophical beliefs of the people, as it was rooted in humanity. The Reshi cult became the popular faith of the masses.

Cashmere Sufis were also influenced by the ascetic and meditative practices of Mahayana Buddhism. Taking into consideration the local historical heritage, ethnic identities, traditions, and customs, the social changes they inspired can be seen as both a *Tasawuf* revolution in Cashmere and a "Cashmirisation" of Islam. This cultural blend with interreligious influences led to the development of a distinct Kashmiri identity.

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35
CHAPTER

Diaphanous lines passing between Reshiyat and Sufiyat were aptly comprehended by Sultana Kota Rani

Holy and spiritual visits to Sharda Peeth and prominent Nagas and shrines were ancestral traditions of ancient Cashmere. After the Islamic Sufi influence under the blessings of Bulbulshah and Shah Hamdan, the people of Cashmere received the best streams of spirituality from all the faiths prevailing in the subcontinent at that time. The preachings of Sufi Muslim saints also encouraged the masses to continue their visits to the shrines, which were mostly built near such Nagas (*springs*) and Reshi abodes.

It was an essential and common phenomenon among a large section of Muslims in the valley to visit the *Tasawuf* shrines of Sufi and Reshi personalities. The people believed that visiting these shrines and praying there would fulfill their worldly wishes, as the graves of these saints were believed to possess miraculous powers that enabled them to listen to and grant their devotees' prayers.

The ancestral ritual in Cashmere of paying *nazar wa niyaz* (gifts) to the respective shrines when wishes were granted continues to this day. Supplicants also tie motive rags (*d'ash*) to the shrines to secure worldly objectives. These rags are left in place until the objective is realized. This spiritual practice has been in vogue in Cashmere since Lalitaditya Muktapada built the Reshi shrine in the name of Reshi Saint Shankaracharya on Takht-e-Sulaiman. After the arrival of Hazrat Bulbulshah and Shah Hamdan, these practices of tying rags by devotees extended to all *Tasawuf* shrines.

Sultana Kota Rani was a vegetarian and continued to remain vegetarian even after adopting the Sufi paths of Islam on the advice of Bulbulshah. Hazrat Bulbulshah never objected to this, as *Uruf* allowed local traditions to continue. Even today in Cashmere, vegetarianism is practiced on the anniversaries of Muslim Reshis such as the great Reshi of Batamol Srinagar, Reshimol of Anantnag, Baba Shukur-ud-Din, and Baba Reshi of Baramulla. These places are called *Asthans* (derived from *Asthapan*, meaning a center of pilgrimage).

As previously mentioned, Sultana Kota Rani would often visit springs (*spirings*) for meditation. These springs were abundant with spring fish. While Islamic doctrines do not forbid the consumption of spring fish, in Cashmere, the practice of not catching or eating spring fish has been handed down from pre-historic times. This tradition remains so deeply ingrained that eating these fish is considered a sin by local Muslims, similar to the prohibition of eating beef.

The people of Cashmere also found similarities in various Sufi chants rendered in original Khurasani styles and tunes, which were taught to the locals by Akhoons on the advice of Bulbulshah. These religious verses, asking for the purity of the soul, were performed in *Sama Sadaat* styles and had a soothing effect on devotees, akin to the practices of Shaivites in their religious places using Sanskrit or Kashmiri dialects.

The spread of Sufism and the conversion of faith led by Hazrat Bulbulshah and Hazrat Shah Hamdan were significantly influenced by frequent *Sama Sadaats*. These spiritual gatherings often conveyed faith through musical instruments and spiritual skills. Hazrat Shah Hamdan himself recorded that he held 40 *Sama Sadaats* in 40 houses simultaneously during the same full moon night. His *Chahal Israr* (40 rhythmic *Masnawies*) are still revered in Cashmere, and similar *Sama Sadaats* under the light of the full moon are held in honor of Hazrat Shah Hamdan to this day.

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36
CHAPTER
Sultana Kota Rani's spiritual experience to derive humanity through spectrum of Shivism, Mahayana, Reshiyat and Sufiyat

Sufi orders accommodating the basic spirit of faith of Buddhist and Hindu scholars in Cashmere was a unique experience, as all believed that in spirituality and faith, violence or force had no role or scope. Interaction and debates were given more importance, ensuring the freedom of all faiths.

When coming into contact with the Muslim saint Sharaf-ud-Deen Bulbulshah, not only scholars of the Theravada and Mahayana schools but also the Trikites (Shaivites) preferred Sufi orders. These orders, with their rich background and direct links to the Khurasan and Baghdad Sufi traditions, were beautifully presented by Bulbulshah. This rejuvenated the already existing Reshi order in Cashmere, which bore similarities to the Sufi orders of Khurasan.

The arrival of Hazrat Abdul Rahman Sharaf-ud-Deen Bulbulshah opened a spiritual corridor between Khurasan and Cashmere. Sufi orders such as *Tawakul*, *Fana*, *Baqa*, *Moirifat*, *Karaamat*, *Qayas*, and *Hikmat* brought a bouquet of philosophies and high-order knowledge that Bulbulshah gifted to the people of Cashmere.

The evolution and preservation of the merger of three Sufi streams in Cashmere became a living example when the spiritual trio—Hazrat Bulbulshah, Renchenshah, and Kota Rani—interacted on the shores of Vitasta (renamed Jehlum by Bulbulshah) during one spiritual morning when Bulbulshah gave the first *Azaan* in Cashmere.

The stone-carved lotus flower presented by the royal couple to Bulbulshah, along with a stone-carved prayer mat, still exists in the holy shrine. Both Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani placed their hands in the hand of the spiritual leader Bulbulshah and vowed to strengthen Sufi Reshiyat in Cashmere. Bulbulshah retied Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani through the spiritual bonds of *Nikah*. Both remained not only loyal to one another but also played a significant role in enriching *Tasawuf* in Cashmere, as evidenced in the subsequent years of the same 14th century.

Cashmere preferred the Sufi order because it resembled the Shaivite philosophy of chanting praises to God in whatever way one remembers Him in their soul and heart. This similarity was the main reason for the rapid and mass conversion to the Sufi Hanafi doctrines of Islam by a large population in Cashmere during Bulbulshah's period.

Broadly speaking, both Buddhist and Hindu societies in Cashmere were divided by intellectual and ideological differences within their own factions. For instance, Hindu society was divided into Shaivites and non-Shaivites, while followers of Buddhism were split over Mahayana and non-Mahayana teachings.

Lalitaditya built a house for his Reshi Guru Attri Gupta on the shores of Vitasta, near the present Sufi Khankah of Hazrat Bulbulshah. He revived the recitation of *Lahri Sundariya* of Shankaracharya on the summits of Takht-e-Sulaiman, the first *Reshinama* of Cashmere, and rebuilt the Temple of Reshi Knowledge over Takht.

The Buddhist order through Mahayana was shaped according to Reshi doctrines in Cashmere, and from Cashmere, the Reshi-influenced Buddhism was adopted by Tibet, China, and Afghanistan, extending even to Khurasan. After the Khanjarib conference, Prince Renchenshah agreed with Sultana Kota Rani that the Reshi order of Cashmere and the Tibetan *Renpoochay Mahayana* order were similar to the *Shanzi Secret [Gupt]* Tasawuf order. Together, they became a strong ideological power, successfully saving Cashmere from the terror onslaught of Dalcha Zulqadar Khan.

For a long span of time, Cashmere witnessed conflicts between Hindu and Buddhist communities. The radicals among them often destroyed each other's places of worship. Glaring examples can be found during the rule of Mihirakula or Mihiran Gula (502 A.D., 6th century), Harsha

(1089-1101 A.D.), and Susala (1111-1128 A.D.). Similarly, non-Shaivites destroyed Viharas and built their own places of worship.

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37
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani provided spiritual space to saintesses in Cashmere

The most significant achievement of Sultana Kota Rani was to preserve all Reshi orders in Cashmere. Since childhood, she made extraordinary sacrifices to enrich Reshi culture in Cashmere. She studied the relationship between the Reshi order and the administrative setup in Cashmere during Lalta Datya Muktapada's period, which elevated Cashmere's image to heights of glory. A vast territory, including parts of China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, portions of Khurasan, Kanoj, Punjab, and Bengal, came under the territorial jurisdiction of Cashmere.

The beauty of Reshiyat lies in the fact that a single Sufi scholar, Hazrat Bulbulshah Turkistani Khurasani, arrived at the same time when Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah and Queen Sultana Kota Rani had married under Hindu and Buddhist tenets. Such was the effect of Hazrat Bulbulshah's Sufi knowledge that they not only took *bai'at* (oath) on his hand but also allowed him to tie them again in spiritual bonds by reciting *nikah,* marking the first royal *nikah* in Cashmere.

This historic trio of Cashmere played an exemplary role in uniting all spiritual faiths. They merged all ancient rituals and traditions of Cashmere, which were dominated either by Buddhism or Hinduism, into a single Sufi-Reshi order, representing a composite culture. This renaissance, the first of its kind in Cashmere, helped to defeat the non-believing Mongols who refused the existence of God.

The mystic significance also lies in the historical fact that Hazrat Bulbulshah chose the shores of Vitasta, where Lalta Datya Muktapada had built a Reshi abode for the founder of Reshiyat, Attri Gupta, in

Cashmere in the 8th century. These places and abodes still exist today and stand as witnesses to the Sufi and Reshi interactions in Cashmere.

After Sultana Kota Rani succeeded in evolving the best form of Reshi thoughts—which incorporated the ancient cultures of Buddhist and Hindu traditions—Islamic *tasawwuf* glorified it like a fragrant bouquet of spiritual flowers. Lal Ded (Lala Arifa) was born immediately after Sultana Kota Rani sacrificed her life to preserve the purity of Cashmere. Lal Ded, who preceded Sheikh-ul-Aalam Nund Reshi, was the first great saint-poetess of the valley, leaving an indelible mark on the composite culture of Cashmere, known as Kashmiriat. She understood that Cashmere's *tasawwuf* represented the ancient past of Cashmere and a fresh Islamic *tasawwuf*.

Once we research the Sufi vision of Lal Ded (Laleshwari, also known as Lala Arifa), it becomes evident that she projected spiritual thoughts acceptable to all three religious fraternities. She was born when Hazrat Bulbulshah's influence on Cashmere society was dominant. In the later phase of her life, just a few days before her death, Hazrat Shah Hamdan arrived in Cashmere, continuing the doctrines introduced by Bulbulshah.

Thus, Laleshwari becomes an authentic example of the merger of Sufi and Reshi culture in Cashmere. She was the first experimentalist to present a composite form of spirituality agreed upon by the historic trio—Sultana Kota Rani, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, and their *murshid* Hazrat Bulbulshah. Lal Ded's powerful expressions changed the course of her times. Though born into an orthodox idol-worshiping Hindu family, she promoted monism and divinity, just as Bulbulshah succeeded in convincing the royal couple Renchenshah and Sultana Kota Rani.

Lal Ded was able to strike a fine balance between Islamic and Hindu concepts about life and divinity, in the same way as the historic trio had agreed near the abode of Attri Gupta and the *khankah* of Bulbulshah. Sultana Kota Rani's valor and vision never died but remained alive in subsequent traditions. Besides Lal Ded, other notable saintesses such as Sham Bibi, Dahat Ded, and Behat Ded continued this extraordinary chain of *tasawwuf*. Their contributions enriched the composite format of Sufi Reshiyat, making Cashmere's spiritual literature among the best in the world.

It was due to their influence that Sheikh Noor-ud-Deen Noorani, towards the end of his life, took some women saintesses into his circle of disciples. Among them, Yawan Machi was prominent, and she is buried alongside the holy shrine of Sheikh Noor-ud-Deen Wali R.A., under the name Shanga Bibi.

The mother of Nund Reshi, known as Sodur Mauj, the wife of Shepherd Salar-ud-Deen, is also considered a saintess of the same composite order. The addition of the word “Deen” to Salar’s name suggests that the family adhered to the doctrines of Sharaf-ud-Deen Bulbulshah R.A. Sheikh Noor-ud-Deen’s wife, Zai Ded, is also regarded as a Reshi saintess who kept alive the Reshi light of Sultana Kota Rani.

The significance of the continuity of Reshiyat can be understood from the elegy of Sham Bibi, a saintess and disciple of Sheikh-ul-Aalam, who hailed from Honchipora Khag. She used the Sanskrit word *Surag* for Sheikh-ul-Aalam and repeatedly referred to Nund Reshi as *Nund Sanz*. Her historic lines on Sheikh-ul-Aalam’s death plate read, *“Nund Sanz goa Saurgus motia,”* which translates to “Nund Reshi fell in love with Heaven.”

This illustrates that, in the 14th century, there was no distinction between the Hindu concept of *Surag* and the Islamic *Jannat*. This was the beauty of Sufism, for which Sultana Kota Rani made extraordinary sacrifices. Bahati Reshi and Dahati Reshi, two prominent saintesses of Driygam, are mentioned in various chronicles as personal witnesses to the historic meeting between Hazrat Shah Hamdan and Nund Reshi.

This meeting was akin to the Khanjreeb Point Summit between Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, as well as the spiritual conference of the trio—King Renchenshah, Queen Kota Rani, and Hazrat Bulbulshah. The Driygam summit between Nund Reshi Sheikh-ul-Aalam and Shah Hamdan was a significant spiritual debate, contrasting the Sufi doctrines of Cashmere with the Persian Sufi *tareeqat* of Hamdan.

When Shah Hamdan sarcastically asked why Nund Reshi was so thin and frail, Dahat Bibi responded on his behalf, saying, “People in pursuit of the ultimate truth attach no importance to the body.” When questioned about spiritual liberation, Dahat Bibi’s impromptu response was that if she were not spiritually liberated, she would not be participating in the august company of Shah Hamdan and Sheikh-ul-Aalam.

When Shah Hamdan raised the question about gender differences between males and females, both saintesses responded on behalf of Sheikh-ul-Aalam, while he maintained mystic silence. Dahat Bibi replied, “If I were non-existent, I would neither be male nor female,” meaning the Reshi cult made no distinction between genders, as both are products of one enduring reality. The ultimate is neither he nor she. This conversation is considered an endorsement of the Driygam summit, asserting that the Sufi-Reshi order of Cashmere imposes no prohibition on women attaining sainthood. It affirmed the vision of Sultana Kota Rani that Reshiyat in Cashmere is eternal and permanent, irrespective of gender differences.

Sultana Kota Rani was devoted to Attri Gupta as well as Abhinav Gupta, but immediately after the arrival of Hazrat Bulbulshah, she accepted his Sufi doctrines. This speaks volumes about her intellectual heights and vision of renaissance and pluralism. Earlier, before the Mongol invasions of Cashmere, she was a frequent visitor to Gupt Ganga, the secret holy stream flowing from the summits of Buddhist stupas in the Harwan mountains (Hari Chandran) towards Nishat.

Sultana Kota Rani had heard that Attri Gupta often meditated on the shores of the holy secret Ganga, attributed to Attri Gupta. On the shore of this secret Ganga stood the Reshi Temple, which had existed since Attri Gupta's time in the 8th century. During the lifetime of Sultana Kota Rani, this temple was a glorious landmark on the shores of Gupt Ganga on the Zaberwan Hills. In this temple, the most beautiful virgins performed the most difficult and skillful spiritual Shiva dances. Each movement was a direct communication with Shiva, conveying spiritual messages through various gestures of fingers and arms or swift movements with a dagger in hand. The dagger was often shot like an arrow towards the summit of Hari Chandran Mountain to symbolically halt the descent of evil.

In the late 14th century, the most famous Shiva spiritual dancer was Yawan Matsi, who later became Shang Bibi. She was exceedingly beautiful. During the time of Sultan Sikander, Suha Bhatta conspired to discredit Sheikh-ul-Aalam, a staunch opponent of the radical policies of Sultan Sikander. Suha Bhatta and Saif Malik identified Yawan Matsi and induced her to visit Nund Rishi's hermitage to test his moral character, hoping to expose him before the public. Their conspiracy aimed to defame Sheikh-ul-Aalam and portray him as a shameful figure.

Yawan Matsi performed a splendid show along with her troupe to test Sheikh-ul-Aalam's moral character. However, during the midst of her dance, Sheikh Noor-u-Deen suddenly broke his meditation and looked toward her face. A spiritual ray emanated from Nund Reshi's eyes, and the entire countenance of Yawan Matsi transformed into that of an old, wretched woman. She fainted in horror, and after regaining consciousness, she wept at Noor-u-Deen's feet. Yawan Matsi renounced her dancing career and became a Sufi disciple of the great Rishi. She then led a strict ascetic life and was buried adjacent to the tomb of Hazrat Sheikh Noor Deen Noorani at Chara-e-Sharief. She attained a high stature as the popular Saintess Shang Bibi of Cashmere.

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38
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's Renaissiance of Reshiyat was formally amplified by Sheikh ul Aalam through his poetic Shruks

It was during the lifetime of Lala Daed (Laleshwari) that, in a remote village of Qomu in Cashmere, another Reshi Sufi saint, Nund Reshi, was born. The entire atmosphere at the time was dominated by the composite ideology of the trio Hazrat Bulbulshah, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, and Sultana Kota Rani, along with the *vakhs* of Laleshwari (Lala Daed).

Inside a spiritual cave in Qomu, Cashmere, the systematized concepts were taken forward by Hazrat Sheikh Noor-U-Deen Noorani and developed further under the name of the Reshut or Rishi movement. This movement influenced and permeated almost all aspects of Cashmere life, culture, arts, education, and folklore. Thus, the composite culture of Sufi Reshiyat became an integral part of the collective subconscious of the Cashmeries.

Cashmere traditions say that Lala Daed breastfed the infant Nund Rishi after he refused to take his mother's milk. Reshi and Sufi philosophy view this act of breastfeeding by Virgin Lala Daed (Lala Arifa) as the continuity of spiritual enlightenment from all the spiritual streams of the globe. Through breastfeeding, Lala Daed is believed to have given bountiful divine enlightenment with every gulp that Nund Rishi took from her.

Sultana Kota Rani's vision that the entire Cashmere would embrace the composite culture of Sufi Reshiyat proved correct. A few decades after the establishment of this culture in Cashmere, a chain of wandering ascetics engaged in constant spiritual introspection emerged from the spiritually fertile soil of the region.

All these subsequent Reshis, including Baba Naseeb Gazi, Zainshah Wali, Reshi Moul, Khan-e-Moul, Dawood Reshi, Lateef-ud-Deen Reshi, Zirak Reshi, Ashkoor Reshi, Payam-ud-Deen Reshi, and thousands of other Awaliyas, Reshis, Malangs, and Sufi legends, carried forward the same *Tareeqat* (spiritual path) of the Sufi Reshi culture. This culture took root in Cashmere following the arrival of Hazrat Bulbulshah.

These ascetics examined the world around them and abandoned their earthly comforts for the realization of the ultimate truth. They broke away from worldly attachments with the fire of their divinity. Many of them turned to poetry, recitation of *Nawat Darood Shariefs*, and *Kalams* to express their love for the divine.

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CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's affinities with Summits of Buddhist Hari Chandran, Mahadoeve, Astaan Marag , Bulbulshah Rock, Harwan, Takhat e Sulaiman and Shankrachariya

Sultana Kota Rani was both a Reshi scholar and an administrator. Before meeting the Prince of Tibet, Renchenshah, at the summits of Khanjreeb Point, she had conducted an in-depth study of the spiritual Harwan Mountains, Mahadeo summits, and the Aastan Marag Bulbulshah rocks in Harwan.

Sultana Kota Rani had studied the ancestral past of Cashmere through images embossed on hard brick tiles, which were decorated all around the magnificent three stupas located in Echo Valley, present deep in the lap of the spiritual Hari Chandran Mountain. These magnificent monasteries were rare during that period and were constructed during the time when Kanishka held the fourth Buddhist conference of scholars in the Echo Valley of Hari Chandran.

Sultana Kota Rani had found, around the Buddhist Stupa, a narrow fringe of figured tile pavements. These pavements decorated the monastery's monuments to which the tiles belonged. A closer scrutiny of the hillside revealed that the ruins were arranged in level terraces, with several buildings on each terrace. On the highest terrace, a large apsidal temple was excavated, built in the picturesque diaper-pebble style masonry.

The temple consisted of a spacious rectangular antechamber with a circular sanctum, covered with a terracotta-tiled floor adorned with various motifs. The temple's plan was very similar to the Lomas Rishi cave in Barabar Hills (Bihar) and the early chaitya at Kondivite near Bombay.

Sultana Kota Rani had given a stone-carved lotus to Hazrat Bulbulshah at the Khankah near Attri Gupta's abode on the shores of Vitasta. The importance of the lotus in Cashmere dates back to ancient Buddhist sites. Even Lalitaditya Muktapada, who had fully elevated the Reshi cult in Cashmere, was fond of the lotus flower and made it the national flower of Cashmere.

During his reign, Lalitaditya's empire spanned vast territories, extending from the north to the east, including Afghanistan, Khurasan, and parts of China. He had placed images of the lotus in Kanauj as a mark of his triumph. Similarly, in the Harwan Monastery, the lotus image held significant importance. The name Harwan is derived from Hari Chandran, and the tiles represented the Hindu and Buddhist joint spiritual culture. The wall and floor tiles were arranged to form an enormous open lotus, possibly representing the cosmic lotus. The symbolism of the lotus pervades Cashmere's art.

Even during Sultana Kota Rani's time, lotus images occupied the exact positions they had been laid in by ancient artisans in various Reshi sites and secret (Gupt) abodes. In the Harwan Monastery, several tiles bore Kharoshthi script numerals, arranged in strict numerical order. The presence of Kharoshthi numerals also tentatively dates the tiles to an earlier era.

According to R.C. Kak, who served as Prime Minister of Cashmere in the 19th century, Kharoshthi was an ancient language. When compared with other numerological figures, the script resembles those of ancient Confucian China and Khurasan, suggesting an overlap between Kharoshthi and Khurasani cultures.

R.C. Kak pointed out that Kharoshthi ceased to be the main language in the area by the 5th century AD. The fact that even common laborers were expected to know the language indicates its peak popularity during earlier times. Based on these findings, Kak suggested the 3rd-4th century AD as the probable period for the Harwan tiles and structures.

Most curious are the tiles running around the temple, which depict three naked ascetics in the central band with a row of geese holding half-blown lotuses. When these images are compared with the vakhs of

Laleshwari, it becomes evident that the saintliness of females in Cashmere had ancient Reshi and Mahayana roots.

Sultana Kota Rani was a frequent visitor to Hari Chandran. Her detailed study of the Harwan Monastery likely revealed that the division of space and the conversational figures on the top band closely resembled Kushana Mathura sculptures from the 2nd century CE. Based on the script and style, the tiles can be dated to the 3rd-4th century AD. The facial features also resemble those found at Ushkur and Akhnur regions. Even during Sultana Kota Rani's time, many ascetic figures were embossed on the wall tiles of the Harwan Monastery. This shows that before the Buddhist monuments were constructed, part of the site or the entire site was dedicated to earlier Reshi saints and saintesses. Attri Gupta had traced the flow of the Gupt Ganga to the spiritual site of Hari Chandran. The ascetics were depicted seated in "kakasana" (a yogic pose) and appeared to be in meditation.

Accordingly, at the Khanjreeb summit, while interacting with the Prince of Tibet, Renchenshah, the historical significance of Cashmere as recorded on the walls of the Harwan Monastery proved invaluable for Sultana Kota Rani.

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CHAPTER

Dogmatic status of Mystic Heritage abodes in Cashmere during Sultana Kota Rani's period

There are various such abodes and heritage sites in Cashmere that Sultana Kota Rani admired during her time. Among the most significant are the stone-carved Nimaz prayer place, carved out of a single unit column of special stone, and the first podium, carved out of a huge rock with intricate work around its border, where Bulbulshah delivered khutba. These structures still exist within the Khankah premises of Hazrat Bulbulshah, adjacent to Attri Gupta's house, now known as Bharoe Temple.

These rare evidences date back to the period of Sultana Kota Rani (1320 A.D.–1339 A.D.). Srinagar, rebuilt by her husband Sultan Sader-ud-Din Renchenshah as Shahar-e-Khass (Special City), became home to magnificent structures like the Khankah, Jamia Mosque, and other heritage abodes built by him, which assumed great historical significance. When Sufi Islam was introduced in Cashmere, various new heritage sites were established, adding glory to earlier ones. The stone-carved Nimaz prayer place, stone-carved lotus flower, and the first khutba podium carved from stone still exist between the holy shrines of Hazrat Bulbulshah and Hazrat Sader-ud-Din Renchenshah.

Sultana Kota Rani, along with her husband Sultan Sader-ud-Din Renchenshah, played a vital role in building the first mosque in Cashmere, still known as Sultan Renchenshah's Jamia Awal. This old mosque, located on the shores of Vitasta (Jehlum), is a few yards away from Bharoe Temple. Its heritage stone foundations still exist near the holy shrine of Hazrat Owasi Sahib, who was beheaded by Sultan

Sikander and Saif-ul-Malik Suha Bhatta's forces in the premises of Jamia Awal.

Sultana Kota Rani's esteem for Attri Gupta is narrated in various chapters of this text. The house for Attri Gupta, built by Lalitaditya Muktapada in the 8th century and later converted into Bharoe Temple, still exists a few yards away from the Khankah of Hazrat Bulbulshah.

In Cashmere, the first significant royal grave was that of Sultan Sader-ud-Din Renchenshah, who was assassinated during the full moon night of June 21st as a result of a conspiracy by Shamas Swati. He was buried near the holy Khankah of Hazrat Bulbulshah R.A. On the day of his burial, the entire population of Cashmere assembled for the fateh (prayer) ceremony.

The holy shrine still exists on the shores of Vitasta (Jehlum), near the abode of Attri Gupta and the Khankah of Hazrat Bulbulshah. The holy graves of Hazrat Bulbulshah and Hazrat Mullah Ahmad Akhoon are inside the Khankah Bulbulshah. The royal carved gravestone of the first Sufi king of Cashmere, Sultan Sader-ud-Din, is present inside the shrine.

The abode of the Reshi queen Kota Rani, converted by a chain of Reshi peers into meditation abodes, still exists a few yards away from the Bulbulshah shrine, inside a lane called Batayaar Lane in old Bodh Ghat, now Aali Kadal.

Across the Vitasta (Jehlum) River exists another mosque, now converted into a food store. The ancient 14th-century pillars installed during that time are still standing, along with the remains of the wooden bridge that once connected the shrine to this mosque.

The abode of Hiun Tsang was named Yarqand Saraie across the Vitasta (Jehlum) River, near the present Safa Kadal. This site became a safe and protected treasury (Tosha Khana) during the tenure of Prime Minister Ramchandra, the father of Sultana Kota Rani. It was in this guarded treasury, Yarqand Saraie that a scuffle occurred between Ramchandra and Suha Devoe. During this altercation, a sword strike by Suha Devoe's personal guard regiment left Ramchandra half-dead, after which he was imprisoned in Inderkote. The entire Cashmere treasure was housed in Yarqand Saraie. The ruins of this Saraie still exist, including the spot where an old tree was planted, visible upon entering the 14th-century structure.

Sultana Kota Rani encouraged Reshi culture in Cashmere. Zulqader Khan slaughtered many distinguished Reshis during his invasion of Cashmere; however, some managed to escape. One of these was Ibrahim Reshi, who was the Reshi guru of Sultana Kota Rani.

Ibrahim Reshi is buried inside an ancient shrine a few yards away from Yarqand Saraie. His shrine still exists, featuring a uniquely carved gravestone that miraculously hangs in the air. It is believed that threads can still pass through the grave and epitaph stone, and that Ibrahim Reshi, deep within the grave, remains in a meditative state, with oxygen flowing to the site.

Sultana Kota Rani, along with Ibrahim Reshi, participated in Reshi performances. From the interior side of Ibrahim Reshi's shrine, Shadad Lane leads to a yard known as Dender Point. Shahdaad Yard at Dender Lane houses a large shrine made of square stones. Mirza Hyder Duglat, in his *Tarekh-i-Rashidi*, writes that such huge stones were also seen in Afaaqi shrines of Kashgaria. These rare Afaaqi stone shrines still exist in Shahdaad graveyard, a few yards away from Yarqand Saraie.

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CHAPTER

Influence of first Ancient Reshi Naama Sundhariya Lahri on Sultana Kota Rani

In our previous chapters, we have written about Lahari Sundariya of Shankrachariya Reshi Saint, whose abode was built by Lalitaditya Muktapada on the Takhat-e-Sulaiman Summit. Kota Rani studied the structure made by Muktapada over Takhat-e-Sulaiman and compared it to Harwan Monastery. She observed that the tiles of Takhat-e-Sulaiman were similar to Harwan tiles and resembled those of Shanxi Mountain in China, the ancestral place of Rechen Gyalson. Both the Harwan tiles and the tiles at Shankrachariya Takhat-e-Sulaiman contained depictions of Sundariya Lahri, inscribed through various images that can be conveniently termed as Reshi Images of Cashmere.

After Sultana Kota Rani's death, some reports suggest her son was taken to Tulmulla, where a Sufi shrine in the name of Hazrat Hyder exists. Others believe his grave is in Chadora, where the shrine of Hazrat Hyder Shah, along with the graves of two or three companions connected to the 14th century, is located. The Akhoon Kashgari shrine at Ishber Hills also belongs to the same period. Similarly, as Kota Rani's canals still flow in Shahar-e-Khass, numerous places are dedicated to her son, Hyder Shah.

Sultana Kota Rani took pride in the Reshi King Sangramraja, who defeated Mahmood Ghaznavi at Tosamaidan. The huge rock where Bulbulshah sat before his arrival still exists in Tosamaidan, a few yards from the mysterious Goddess Sita spring that has been flowing since time immemorial. Pandit scholar Ram Prakash, who authored Cashmere Ramayana verses, described how Ravana attempted to kidnap Goddess Sita at this place but was forced to flee by the local people. The village is still known as Sita Haran. The Sundariya Lahri of Shankrachariya also contains Reshi verses that depict the spirituality of Cashmere.

The place where Sheikh-ul-Aalam meditated and the first stone rock where Bulbulshah sat in Sita Haran village, Tosamaidan, still exist. Nakwair Pal, where an iron ring is embedded in a huge rock near Damam Sar, marks the spot where Mahmood Ghaznavi was defeated by the Lohara warrior Sangramraja. Nourpur Gali, which connects Poonch through Tosamaidan and China Marg, retains its original terminology. The remains of the seven-story Damam Sar are still visible, as described in various Reshinamas of Cashmere, where it is noted that Reshis meditated at this site.

Similarly, the Saat Baran (Seven Doors of Spirituality) on Kala Rous Mountains hosted Reshi Sufis of Tasawuf during subsequent centuries. Sultan Sikander beheaded many Reshi saints at this location. Caves on the Kala Rous (Headless) Mountains also exist to this day. Ganesh Pal in Dachigam is a significant site, resembling a similar place in Hunza Valley near Khunjerab Pass. A few yards from Ganesh Pal is the Maha Deov Mountain, and a 4th-century statue of Shiva Mahadeva excavated from a water reservoir has been moved to the office of the Archaeological Department.

As mentioned earlier, besides monasteries on Harwan Mountains, another summit known as Aastan Marg, opposite the Buddhist mountain, has a huge rock where Hazrat Bulbulshah rested, similar to the one at Tosamaidan. This rock is known as Bulbulshah Paal. The Aastan Marg mountain lies above Gandtal Mountain and Darah Shikoh Mountain. Darah Shikoh, the son of a king, adopted Reshi traditions of Cashmere.

During the reign of Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Din Renchenshah, the first Eid prayer was presided over by Hazrat Bulbulshah in Eidgah Maidan. Decades later, Shah Hamdan built a mosque in Eidgah, dedicated to Hazrat Ali A.S. This mosque, built during Shah Hamdan's time, still exists.

Unfortunately, some radical groups now mispronounce the name as "Aael Mashed," where *Aael* in the Cashmere language refers to holes of insects and rats. This derogatory term for a mosque is condemnable. In Mirjan Pora, the grave of Mohammad Mohitee Yarqandi of Kashgar still exists. He was the individual who brought Waqf assets from Yarqand to Cashmere. In 1937, these assets were transported from Doomail to the Tosha Khana of the Maharaja of Jammu and Cashmere. The nine trunks of treasure remained safe in the Tosha Khana until 1947, but their locks were later broken by the Waqf chief in the cabinet rooms.

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CHAPTER

Impact of Heavenly beauties of Cashmere in natural growth and flourishment of Sufi ideologies in Cashmere

While researching Kota Rani, it was earlier mentioned that Reshi culture flourished amidst the heavenly beauty of Cashmere. The existence of Sufi Muslim shrines, as well as Hindu religious places on the shores of the Vitasta (Jhelum River), natural springs, *sars,* and *naags* (fountains), are part of such research-oriented existing realities. The Neil Naag, referred to in the Neelmat Puran from Kashab Reshi's time, is located in Yousmarg. Ahead of Chrar-e-Sharief and Pakarpora, the Ali Aali Balkhi Shrine stands as a living example of the composite cultures of our 14th century. The Qoumu cave, Drayie Gaam caves, and the cave of Abhinavagupta in Beerwah are existing pieces of evidence of these researches.

Sultana Kota Rani was fond of the fragrance of the flowers of Cashmere. She, being deeply immersed in Reshi culture, believed that Attri Gupta had the fragrance of divinity. Even the tradition of distributing *taheri* (yellow rice) to devotees visiting Muslim and Hindu shrines marks the enduring unity of human culture since the Buddhist era, influenced by Confucian philosophy to establish strong human bonds.

Even today, at holy Sufi *ziyarats* (shrines), fried *nadir* (lotus stem fritters) are given as *tabaruk* (sacred offering), just as *prasad* is given at various Hindu pilgrimage centers. These traditions serve as existing evidence of mutual respect and unity of faiths.

Sultana Kota Rani's belief in "Dashi Gandin" symbolized ancestral spiritual knots. When at Khanjreeb Point, a Prince of Tibet gifted her a blue jewel-handled dagger, she retained it until her last breath as a mark of Daesh. Even today, at Sufi shrines, devotees tie knots as acts of devotion, expressing their desires and prayers. The burning of *isband* seeds, the showering of flowers, and offerings of *sheerini* (sweets), dry almonds, and nuts are tangible practices reflecting this tradition. Similarly, the *wanwun* (folk songs) sung by women as *zikr-e-niswaan* (female chants) and the chanting of the 99 names of God inside mosques by men are continuing traditions. These practices, which were mutually embraced as part of *raie, ren,* and *uruf* during the times of Hazrat Bulbulshah in Kashmir, are still evident today.

Sultana Kota Rani would often visit the spiritual mountain of Hari Parbat, where the Sharika Devi Temple marks the triumph of Goddess Parvati. According to legend, a descendant of her brother, the great Sufi saint Hazrat Makhdoom Sahib, made the summit his abode for Sufi meditation. The holy Hari Parbat, as well as Koh-e-Maraan in Shahar-e-Khas, are prominently mentioned in Rajtarangini by Pandit Kalhana. It is said that Goddess Sharika, in the form of a bird, dropped a pebble on the demon's head, which magnified in size and became known as Hari Parbat.

The Muslim reverence for Hari Parbat Mountain is exemplified by the holy shrine of Hazrat Hamza Makhdoom Raina, located on the mountain. He was a member of the Muslim Sufi order and a strong defender of human rights and love. Muslims also call the mountain Marran, acknowledging that a dragon was destroyed there.

Just as Sultana Kota Rani was spiritually influenced by Sufism and Reshiyat, another prince in subsequent centuries, Dara Shukoh, the son of Shah Jahan, was also drawn to spirituality. He built Pari Mahal on Zabarwan Mountain as a site for Sufi astrological meditation. He also constructed the Mullah Shah Mountain on Hari Parbat, or Koh-e-Maraan, in respect for the Raina Sufi order of Hazrat Makhdoom Sahib, a derivative of the universal Ren order.

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CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani encouraged Khankahi Sprituality in Cashmere

The first Islamic *khankah* of Hazrat Bulbulshah was constructed by Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen. Following the same pattern, similar *khankah* sanctuaries were later established in subsequent centuries, such as the *Khankah* of Shah Hamdaan at Fateh Kadal and the *Khankah* of Gous-ul-Azam, where the holy relic of Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jeelani exists. Shah Jahan and his son Dara Shukoh built an *Ibadat* (worship) house at Hazratbal Dargah Sharif, where the holy relic of the Great Prophet was shifted from Naqashband Sahib after the oppressive rule of Aurangzeb ended.

The *Khankah* Naqashbandiya at Nowhatta, dedicated to Hazrat Baha-ud-Deen Naqashbandi, where Moihe-e-ud-Deen Naqashbandi once stayed, and other sanctuaries such as the *Khankah* of Baha-ud-Deen Ganj Bakhash at Nowhatta and the Zind Shah Mosque at Rainawari, are living testimonies of these historical religious sites that still exist in their respective locations.

During Sultana Kota Rani's time, a stone statue of Lord Shiva existed at the holy Mahadev mountains. The Shiva Lingam at Amarnath was discovered by the Muslim Malik family in 1878 A.D. Before the discovery of the holy Amarnath cave, it was the holy Mahadev mountains where *reshis,* sages, and saints would come to have *darshan* of the first-century stone statue of Shiva at the site.

The abode overlooking Sonamarg on one side and connecting with Amarnath on the other side holds the first- and second-century excavated statue of Mahadev from Sarband, along with the *Brand-e-Kain* (threshold stone) at the peaks of Faqeer Gujri. The *Sueh* (Lion)

Reshi shrine in Harwan and the Ganesh rocks inside Dachigam National Park show similarities with the rocks of the Hunza and Dachigam mountains, the Kanashka Peak on Zabarwan, and the Khunjreeb Point in the Karakoram Range.

At the same time, when Sultana Kota Rani met Prince of Tibet Renchenshah in the same area, a wandering *malang* named Abdul Rahman Baba Gundi, a mystic saint, moved from one summit of the Karakoram to another. It was he who gifted a dagger to the Prince of Tibet, which the prince retained as a symbol of victory, while giving his own dagger to Sultana Kota Rani. The shrine of this same mystic saint still exists in Chipursan near Zood Khoon, the last village of Hunza. It is located in a remote, beautiful, and truly mystical valley in the northernmost part of Hunza, which has been part of Cashmere civilization since the times of Bulbulshah, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, and Sultana Kota Rani.

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44
CHAPTER

Kota Rani's role during Sultan Sader din's time in administration

Sultana Kota Rani was essentially a humanist and a true patriot of Cashmere. She always advised her husband on transforming the entire administrative setup. Kota Rani was deeply influenced by Hazrat Bulbulshah's moral codes of Sufi doctrines to administer the valley of Kashmir.

Sultana Kota Rani witnessed how divine power ended the terror of Dalcha Zulqadar Khan. After this attack, she became keen on reforming and purifying the society. Following the advice of Hazrat Bulbulshah, and fully endorsed by Kota Rani, the first order issued by Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah was the banning of wine and drugs in Cashmere. At that time, the people of Cashmere had become drug addicts, lotus eaters, and excessive wine consumers.

Sultana Kota Rani had attempted to reform society during the rule of her father, Ramachandra, and Emperor Suha Deva, but their ignorance on these issues discouraged her. Since the times of Sussala and Chachala, almost every household had been adversely affected by drowsy substances like *bhang* and *chars.* Additionally, substances such as tobacco were smoked through water pots called *jageer.* Drowsy flowers with addictive properties were consumed along with *kong posh* (saffron), which was abundantly grown since ancient times in Cashmere.

With the implementation of these reforms, people emerged from the clutches of immorality. The lotus flower, considered a spiritual symbol, was also adored by Hazrat Bulbulshah. A stone-carved image of the flower, gifted by Kota Rani to him, still exists in his shrine.

During the time of Hazrat Abdul Rahman Bulbulshah, who was a joint *murshid* (spiritual guide) to Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, several Sufi preachers arrived in Cashmere from regions such as Khurasan, Baltistan, Khanjreeb, Yarkand, Kashgar, and Kazakhstan. These preachers followed Hazrat Bulbulshah to Cashmere.

Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen also acquired Sufi knowledge from another prominent figure, Mullah Shah Akhoon, who is buried in the shrine premises today. These Akhoons, who were voluntary missionaries under the guidance of Hazrat Bulbulshah, opened a new golden chapter of mutual love and peace in Cashmere. Traditions of each faith were respected and accepted by one another, following the doctrine of *Lakum Deena kum waliya Deen* (To you be your religion, and to me, mine), making the freedom of faith an ideal feature of a strong civilization.

The tragedies of Cashmere have always been unending. Wars have not weakened Cashmere as much as the conspiracies within. Since the time of Mahmood Ghaznavi's defeat, Swat has been a historical enemy of Cashmere. Cashmere's history bears witness to the arrival of such enemies disguised as businessmen in the 14th century. Among them, the most prominent was Shams Swati, who came to Cashmere during Suha Deva's era, disguised as a fugitive from Swat, which was under the strong influence of the radical ideologies of Mahmood Ghaznavi.

Sangram Raja of Lohara had already inflicted a humiliating defeat on Mahmood Ghaznavi at Tosamaidan, demonstrating that radicalism and violence in faith were never acceptable to Cashmere at any stage. Since then, radical ideologies were never allowed to infiltrate Cashmere. Later, Swatis came to Cashmere in disguise as migrant businessmen from Swat. Out of charity, Suha Deva granted them land and permission to stay in Baramulla, Cashmere.

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CHAPTER

Historical Blunders committed by Sultan and Sultana by giving undue space to Shamas Swati in Kingdom

Shams Swati was very clever and cunning and took undue advantage of the nobleness of Sultana Kota Rani and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen. He became highly active in winning the confidence of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen as his loyalist. Shams Swati arrived in Srinagar from Baramulla and succeeded in receiving the blessings of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen.

He had brought a group of fighters from Swat in disguise as businessmen. Swat, being a border area of Cashmere from the Pakhtoon side, had close ties to the region. Many people in Cashmere were converted to Islam along with his group, enabling him to come closer to King Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani. Shams Swati gave the impression of his full loyalty along with his contingent of fighters to both of them. However, subsequent historical events bear witness to how he cruelly betrayed their empire.

A historical blunder was committed by both Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani by blindly trusting Shams Swati and allowing him to take an interest in important affairs of the kingdom.

From the very beginning, Shams Swati had his evil eye on the throne of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and the extraordinary beauty and noble Rishi-like soul of Sultana Kota Rani. Unfortunately, Shams Swati was first given a humble entry into the administrative setup of the kingdom. Very soon, through his cunning and misleading sycophancy, he was elevated quickly from one position to another. By portraying himself as the most loyal and self-sacrificing person in the kingdom, he eventually succeeded in achieving a ministerial position in the court of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah.

The credit for saving Cashmere civilization from collapse after Zulqadar Khan Dalcha's savage invasion goes to both Sultana Kota Rani, who chose Renchenshah as the right person to save Cashmere, and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, who proved himself a real lion in defending Cashmere.

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46
CHAPTER

Sultan Kota Rani being symbol of Ren & Raina mystic is measured as glorious Renaissance in Cashmere

Sultana Kota Rani played a significant role in Cashmere, unparalleled in her efforts to integrate faiths through unity and the process of renaissance. When we study the French Renaissance revolution, which renounced radical approaches to faith and adopted synergy through quality and humane approaches, we find its roots germinated in Cashmere during the period of this historical triad. Sultana Kota Rani proved to be a pioneer as she became the fulcrum of Reshiyat, strengthening the spiritual bonds of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

Cashmere was on the brink of collapse during the invasion of Zulqader Khan, a faithless non-believer in God. Dalcha's invasion targeted Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism simultaneously. Sultana Kota Rani, with her sagacious leadership, preserved the ethos of all these faiths due to her strong belief in human love.

As a result of this renaissance, Cashmere became the fountain of Tasawuf streams preaching unity, love, and brotherhood from 1320 A.D. onward. This was a significant spiritual development in the 14th century, where a Buddhist scholar of extraordinary stature and a Hindu Reshi queen merged their ideologies with that of Hazrat Bulbulshah.

The conversion of Sultan Hazrat Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah to Islam through this synergy laid the foundation of Sufiyat in Cashmere, which was later adopted globally as a secular philosophy.

The stature and spirit of Islam reached great heights when Hazrat Abdul Rahman Bulbulshah convinced the great Hindu and Buddhist Reshis that Islam was a true message of human love. Earlier invasions, such as the attack on Sindh during the Banu Umayyad era and the invasion of

Gujarat and Cashmere by Mahmood Gaznavi, had instilled terror among non-Muslims. However, when the true spirit of Islam was communicated by Sufi saints in Central Asia, China, and India, the Reshi sect in Hinduism and Buddhism embraced it as part of Sanatan Dharma or renaissance, particularly between the 11th and 14th centuries.

In Cashmere, the spiritual influence on both the King and Queen, who desired to retain Reshi orders, was endorsed by Bulbulshah. This influence remains dominant in all sections of society in Cashmere.

The introduction of Sufi Hanafi doctrines, compared to other radical streams, was a wise choice, as Hanafi doctrines encouraged Sufiyat and Reshiyat. Sages and seers like Lal Ded (Lalaeshwari) and Sheikh-ul-Alam explained the verses of the Quran through local shruks and vakhs, making the people of Cashmere understand that the Quran Sharief was a divine book of love and spiritual enrichment.

Besides the King, it was Sultana Kota Rani who protected the age-old Reshi streams with the help of great verses of Hikmat from top Sufi orders, which became the renaissance of faith in Cashmere.

This renaissance of cultural unity of faiths in Cashmere and its success in bringing all faiths together to resist the terror of non-believers was later emulated by all civilized societies. Historical chronicles and sutras of Cashmere documented this achievement.

The Renaissance or Reshiyat in Cashmere, marked by the unity of faiths, was no less than a miracle (Karamat) approved by Hazrat Bulbulshah, the great spiritual leader of the time, when the valley was enduring the ugliest phase of invasion by Dalcha Zulqader Khan.

Amidst this atmosphere of hatred and slaughter, Hazrat Bulbulshah presented Islam through his Sufi order as a religion of love, peace, and tranquility. He proved that spirituality, when adopted with sincerity, results in triumph and victory.

In this original renaissance or revolution in Cashmere, the joint forces of Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists inflicted a humiliating defeat on the savage Mongol, Dalcha Zulqader Khan, a descendant of Genghis Khan, Hulagu Khan, and Kublai Khan.

The strength of spirituality through the instrument of renaissance had such a miraculous effect that the terror of Dalcha, a descendant of Hulagu Khan, was buried under snow avalanches in the Dev Sar Panchal range. History cannot forgive Dalcha Zulqader Khan, who plundered Cashmere, burned the city, raped women, and beheaded infants.

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47
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's strengthened unity of culture, traditions and faith of Cashmere

Sultana Kota Rani, daughter of Prime Minister Ramchand, took a stand against her father and the King for the sake of the people of Cashmere. While they were more focused on fighting over shares of treasure than defending Cashmere, Sultana Kota Rani prioritized the welfare of her people. The people of Cashmere were deeply indebted to her for her leadership.

It was her caliber and foresight that led her to choose Prince of Tibet, Renchanshah, and her brother, Rawan Chand, to remain steadfast against the terror of the Mongols while defending Cashmere during such disastrous crises.

When we study Cashmere from the era of Sultana Kota Rani, we find that she strongly believed the strength of Cashmere lay in its cultural, traditional, and faith unity. At the time of Zulqader Khan's invasion, Buddhist and Hindu societies were fragmented due to the emergence of various contradictory ideologies. Dalcha took advantage of this internal chaos and the inefficiency of the last Lohara King, Suha Deva, whose greed and cowardice had tarnished the great image of the Lohara Kingdom.

Immorality, along with the prevalence of wine and drug culture, had adversely affected the entire fabric of Cashmere society since the time of Simha Deva. This uncertainty was exacerbated by Ramchandra's decision to bring a 13-year-old mysterious boy, Suha Deva, and install him as King of Cashmere, claiming he was the abandoned son of Simha Deva. This decision further disrupted the social order.

During Suha Deva's 11-year rule, the widespread abuse of wine and drugs not only infiltrated the empire but also became a major menace in society. The Mongol terror exploited these societal weaknesses, invading Cashmere with a well-equipped army of 70,000 cavalry soldiers.

Hazrat Bulbulshah's mission to reform Cashmere society was a godsend for the people at that time. Beyond any doubt, Bulbulshah transformed the entire social order, marking a turning point in the spiritual history of Cashmere.

The social system of Cashmere, at the time of Bulbulshah's arrival, was polluted with such weaknesses and immorality that the valley was in desperate need of spiritual purification.

Hazrat Bulbulshah convinced the majority of Cashmere's population that Sufi Islam, under the doctrines or Maslak of Imam-e-Azam Abu Hanifa, recognized and respected all local traditions under the provisions of Urf (customs and practices).

He assured the people of Cashmere that their age-old festivals, dresses, culture, music, and languages were as sacred as they existed in Cashmere, serving as proud symbols of their civilization. He promised that no law would be imposed to deprive them of their cherished traditions.

Hazrat Bulbulshah also convinced Sultana Kota Rani, making it clear that there was no scope for opposing or contradicting the rituals and traditions of a proud civilization like Cashmere under the provisions of Urf.

Sultana Kota Rani launched a campaign against obscenity, adultery, terror, theft, killings, usurping others' rights, gambling, and charging interest on debts. This campaign gained widespread support from both Hindu and Buddhist scholars, as these vices had plagued the people of Cashmere. Recognizing the need for reform, the people instantly cooperated with the triad of leaders to purify society.

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48
CHAPTER

Distinguished Role of Sultana Kota Rani to ban consumption of wine and drugs in paradise valley of Cashmere

Sultana Kota Rani supported the advice of Bulbulshah and Renchanshah to strengthen the institution of justice, ensuring equal rights for people of all faiths. The trio had already agreed that the conversion of hearts should occur through self-sacrifice and purification of souls rather than through any exterior compulsion or coercion.

This approach resembled the Rishi order of Cashmere, which Sultana Kota Rani championed. The trio brought about an intellectual revolution in Cashmere, and Sultana Kota Rani played a significant role in cementing communal harmony, which resonated with the peace-loving people of Cashmere.

Sultana Kota Rani's role in banning the consumption of wine and drugs in the valley, ensuring that Cashmere remained free of immorality and vice, was both prominent and significant. Guided by the Reshi doctrines, she had previously fought this issue with her father, Prime Minister Ramachandra, and King Suha Deva. Dr. Lawrence, in his book on Cashmere, mentioned how people of Cashmere had become addicted to wine, charas, and immoral practices during Suha Deva's reign and how this had led to societal decay.

Sultana Kota Rani played a pivotal role in re-glorifying the image of Cashmere, restoring its high standing that had been prominent since the era of Kashyapa. Her efforts made the society an ideal one, and the majority of people, regardless of their faiths, continued to hold her in the highest regard.

Sultana Kota Rani had a deep understanding of the Reshi culture of Cashmere. She not only impressed the Prince of Tibet at Khanjreeb Pass, but her efforts were also appreciated by the Sufi saint Hazrat Bulbulshah. He was himself influenced by the Reshi way of life in Cashmere and encouraged Sultana Kota Rani to preserve the Reshi order.

Bulbulshah gave immense respect to Ibrahim Rishi Peer, the Rajguru of Sultana Kota Rani, for his Reshi way of life. The first Khankah was built for him by the Sultan and Sultana near Bharoe Temple, which was originally the abode of Attri Gupts on the shores of the Vitasta (Jehlum) River, established by Muktapada. The Khankah was enriched with a mixed architectural style, combining Neo-Muslim, Buddhist Vihar, and Hindu temple elements, including tapering nozzles and a Khurasani shrine. This mixed Khankah architecture, with further modifications, later became the hallmark of Dargahs and holy shrines throughout Cashmere.

After Sultana Kota Rani triumphantly defended Cashmere from collapse, the people realized that their fragmentation and ideological divisions had provided an opportunity for Dalcha Zulju Zulqader Khan to attack and plunder Cashmere. The King of Cashmere, Suha Deva, and Prime Minister Ramachandra, Sultana Kota Rani's father, had failed to unite the various factions to resist Dalcha's terror. However, the successful summit at Khanjreeb Pass, where Sultana Kota Rani identified the similarities between Buddhist and Hindu Reshiyat, allowed joint forces to prevail against the terror.

Sultana Kota Rani subsequently observed the success of the human love ideology of Renchanshah when Bulbulshah's doctrine of unity and social coordination quickly brought about revolutionary effects.

The synergy of Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist spirituality through composite Sufi doctrines cemented communal unity in Cashmere.

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CHAPTER

Sultan Sader ud Deen's Commitment to build flood prone new Srinagar city was accomplished by Sultana Kota Rani.

The Mongols had reduced Srinagar to ashes. On the suggestion of Sultana Kota Rani, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah built a new Srinagar city around the great Reshi saint Attri Gupta's house, situated on the shores of the Vitasta River. The entire territorial area of present-day Srinagar was brought under their developmental vision.

In the Master Plan of Srinagar, when terror struck Cashmere again in 1990, the chief of the City Development Plan, Mr. Pampori, highlighted the significance of Hazrat Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah's and Sultana Kota Rani's Master Plan of 1320 A.D. This was prominently featured in the preamble of the 1990 Master Plan. The plan emphasized the revival of the ancient network of flood channels, including the Marran Canal, which were dedicated to flood management during Sultana Kota Rani's time. In 1320 A.D., Srinagar was built in a way that no flood waves could engulf the city. This vision was documented as a guiding plan in 1990, but the re-emergence of terror and the sabotage of Tasawuf and Reshiyat, which had been introduced in Cashmere since 1320 A.D., disrupted its implementation.

While researching how Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah and Sultana Kota Rani built a flood-resistant Srinagar, we must consider how floods had destroyed the previous city of Bijbehara, built by Awanti Verman, including the ancient Srinagar city. The floods posed a significant challenge to Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah and Sultana Kota Rani, who built Srinagar as a city dedicated to the Sun, ensuring it would never face a similar threat.

The original network of water bodies in the city, designed during the Sultan and Sultana's time, was disturbed over time. Its re-adoption in

1990 was not adhered to, resulting in the complete inundation of Srinagar during the floods of 2014.

In the mid-ninth century, an earthquake triggered a landslide that blocked the narrow gorge of the Jhelum River at its exit from the valley. This landslide created a lake extending 100 km along the valley floor, flooding the capital, Srinagar, and vast agricultural lands. A medieval engineer eventually contrived a breach in the landslide, resulting in the catastrophic release of floodwaters. Ancient shorelines indicate that paleo-lake volumes in Cashmere were released in massive floods.

The ancient lakes of Cashmere were not drained by mechanisms exceeding those associated with Suyya's flood. Present-day floods have been significantly shallower than those caused by landslides in the Jhelum River over the past several thousand years.

As related by Kalhana (Dr. Aurel Stein, 1898) and Hassan Shah Kohami in 1896, the mythical origins of Cashmere involve the drainage of a large lake that once occupied the valley. Hassan (1896, *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, 1:55–56) cites archaeological evidence for this myth in the form of stone boat anchors occasionally found far above the present lake.

The formation of a medieval landslide dam is mentioned in two historical accounts of Cashmere. Kalhana's epic Sanskrit poem *Rajatarangini* (Stein, 1898), written roughly two centuries after the event, and the *Tarikh-i-Hassan* (Hassan, 1896) provide evidence. The latter, compiled from multiple sources, briefly describes the landslide's location near the village of Khadanyar and notes that it was induced by an earthquake during the night. The landslide impounded floodwaters as far as Bijbehara.

The mythical flood is also referenced in some interpretations of the Vedic Puranas, attributed to Kashyap Reshi.

According to the *Rajatarangini*, Avantivarman, who ruled Cashmere between 855 and 883 CE, learned of Suyya, described in mythical terms as having been abandoned as a baby but later recognized for his wisdom and engineering skills. Suyya devised an innovative method to remove the mass of the dam by scattering coins into the choked dam, prompting thousands of people to clear it in search of the coins.

When Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani began building the new city of Srinagar, they focused on Suyya's engineering principles to create a flood-resistant city.

The creation of this special Srinagar city is recorded in golden words. Sultan Sader-ud-Deen is honored as the founding father of the special city *Shahar-e-Khas*. The 1990 Master Plan of Srinagar, developed during a time of devastation, credited Hazrat Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah in its preamble as the founder of the city.

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CHAPTER

Foundation of new city of Srinagar symbolized foundation of composite civilization

When we delve deeply into medieval records and subsequent histories written by Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim scholars, we find that the spiritual rule of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani's era was a golden age for Cashmere, marked by communal unity and brotherhood through the spiritual mechanisms of Reshiyat and Sufiyat. The foundation of the new city of Srinagar was laid alongside the restructuring of the composite civilization of Cashmere after Dalcha had completely annihilated its prominent figures through plunder and devastation. The first *Jamia Awal* was built in the Budh Gair area by Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah.

Sultana Kota Rani continued to champion unity and brotherhood even after the brutal assassination of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen. She saved Cashmere, guided by the vision of unity. During Sultan Sader-ud-Deen's reign, full emphasis was placed on fostering unity and brotherhood. Extremist thoughts in religion were not allowed to prevail. Scholars of all major faiths, including Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, were given significant roles in the Sultan's court to ensure religious harmony.

The increasing popularity of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen made Shams Swati jealous, leading him to hatch conspiracies to bring Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah's Sultanate to an end. However, Shams Swati never revealed his internal feelings and behaved as one of the most loyal individuals to Sultan Sader-ud-Deen.

Sultana Kota Rani was somewhat apprehensive about the dubious character of Shams Swati, but Sultan Sader-ud-Deen failed to understand his true intentions. Shams Swati's outward loyalty blinded the Sultan to his schemes. This overtrust allowed Shams Swati to act without scrutiny, enabling him to hatch various dangerous plans to eliminate the Sultan.

Eventually, Shams Swati conspired through his loyalists to assassinate the Sultan. The plan involved unidentified swordsmen who struck during a full moon night when Sultan Sader-ud-Deen was making his usual rounds of the city to address the sufferings of his subjects.

Rishi Queen Sultana Kota Rani gave birth to a son of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, who was named Hyder. The name was bestowed by Hazrat Bulbulshah. Kota Rani devoted herself to raising Hyder, but despite her intelligence and alertness, she could not foresee the conspiracies against her husband.

Hyder was only three years old when Shams Swati's deceitful conspiracies succeeded. On a full moon night, most likely on June 21, unidentified assailants struck Sultan Sader-ud-Deen's head with a sword while he was on a city visit. The attackers vanished into the darkness, and the head injury was so severe that the noble Sultan succumbed to his wounds a few days later.

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CHAPTER

Sudden Martyrdom of Sultan Sader ud Deen Renchenshah led to elevation of Sultana Kota Rani as Reshi Queen Regent of Cashmere

The entire population of Cashmere, including Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists, was shocked when they learned about the martyrdom of their most beloved Sultan, Hazrat Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah. He had saved Cashmere from the clutches of Mongol terror, rebuilt it anew, adhered to the code of equal justice, and enriched the joint spirituality of all faiths.

The cruel conspirators of the kingdom, who succeeded in executing their nefarious designs, plunged Cashmere back into turmoil in the most brutal way. On a full moon night, the King of Cashmere, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, was fatally injured, leading to his martyrdom. This tragedy brought all activities and development in Cashmere to a halt. The entire region was stunned and overwhelmed with grief. Tears flowed, and the people went into prolonged mourning.

Men, women, old and young alike came out of their dwellings, houses, and palaces into the streets. They mourned deeply, beating their chests, unable to find the cause or purpose of this assassination or trace the person behind it.

Shams Swati, who had been unnecessarily elevated to the status of Minister, conspired to assassinate Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah with the aim of taking over the Sultanate. However, after gauging the volatile mood of the people, he chose to suppress his ambitions. He did not dare to stake a claim to the throne, as any maneuvering on his part could have exposed him, leading to him being lynched by the enraged population.

The most popular Sultan of Cashmere, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, was buried at the shrine near the Khankah of his *murshid*, Hazrat Bulbulshah. His only son, Hyder, was just three years old at the time of his assassination, making it impossible for him to ascend the throne.

Accordingly, the Sultan's court unanimously decided that the noble Rishi Queen, Sultana Kota Rani, be declared Queen Regent of Cashmere to administer its affairs until the young Hyder reached adulthood and could assume kingship.

Sultana Kota Rani named the throne after her ancestor Miraan Reshi, calling it the Shah Mir throne, so she could administer it under the title of her husband Renchenshah and Miraan Reshi simultaneously. She made the title of the throne, Shah Miraan, a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity and the seat of Reshiyat. However, Shams Swati later erased and disfigured the Reshi name of Miraan.

The people of Cashmere loved both Sultan Sader-ud-Deen and Sultana Kota Rani to such an extent that they voluntarily gathered around the palace to provide day and night security to Sultana Kota Rani, ensuring that the assassins could not harm the Reshi Sultana of Cashmere.

The secret conspirator, Shams Swati, became highly apprehensive in this critical situation. He concealed his ambitions and ensured that no one in the kingdom suspected his vested interest in the assassination of the noble Sultan.

In a calculated move, Shams Swati vociferously supported the idea of Rishi Sultana Kota Rani taking over the reins of the kingdom. He deliberately buried his desire to rule under the carpet. As a trusted Minister of the late Sultan, he vowed in the court to remain loyal to the new Sultana, Queen Regent Kota Rani, as he had been to Sultan Sader-ud-Deen.

Sultana Kota Rani's brother, Rawan Chander, often mistakenly referred to as Udhay Deove, was younger than Kota Rani. Their elder brother had been kidnapped at the age of 13 under mysterious circumstances orchestrated by their father, Ramachandra.

After the Tatar invasion, Rawan Chander (Udhay Deove) stood steadfastly by his learned Reshi sister, Sultana Kota Rani. When Sader-ud-Deen became the King of Cashmere, before the arrival of Bulbulshah, Rawan Chander, loyal to both Renchenshah and Sultana Kota Rani, gained the full trust of the throne.

Rawan Chander (Udhay Deove) was appointed Minister in the court, where his competence helped strengthen his sister's rule in Cashmere. All other Ministers, including Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim scholars associated with the court, unanimously supported the idea of making Kota Rani the Rishi Queen of Cashmere until Hyder came of age.

Accordingly, after the assassination of her husband, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, Sultana Kota Rani assumed the reins of Cashmere as the last Rishi Queen without any significant rebellion or opposition.

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52
CHAPTER

The most turbulent challenges faced by Queen Regent Sultana Kota Rani after assassination of her husband

The assassination of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, husband of Sultana Kota Rani, was a most traumatizing and shocking event for her. It was like an earthquake that jolted not only the entire Cashmere but also the very foundations of the renaissance of Sufiyat and Reshiyat.

Following the assassination of her loving husband, the top scholars of Cashmere, irrespective of faith, color, region, or race, provided their full moral support to Sultana Kota Rani.

Sultana Kota Rani was determined to uncover the real conspirators who, while hiding behind their veils, martyred the great King of Cashmere, a savior of the valley when it was on the brink of extinction.

His midnight visits to the city to alleviate the suffering of the needy were reminiscent of the style of Hazrat Umar Farooq (R.T.), as taught to him by Hazrat Bulbulshah, who emphasized the importance of reaching the people at their doorsteps.

On the full moon night of June 21st, while Sultana Kota Rani was reciting the 99 names of God taught to her by Hazrat Bulbulshah, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen sought her permission for a night visit to the city to assist those in need.

Sultana Kota Rani observed the golden rays of the full moon illuminating the glowing countenance of the great Emperor of Cashmere as he departed for this noble cause. During such visits, the dagger given to him by Gundi Malang of the Karakoram Pass and the blue-jeweled handled dagger gifted by Sultana Kota Rani were traditionally tied under his royal robe for divine safety.

According to folklore in Cashmere, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen left hurriedly that night. After completing her recitation of the 99 names of God, Sultana Kota Rani realized she had forgotten to place the daggers under Sultan's robe. She ran barefoot from her room, yelling for the Sultan to stop, but it was too late. The Sultan's horse, known as the "flying horse" for its incredible speed, was already galloping away.

Sultana Kota Rani stood at the palace's main gate like a statue, her heart beating fast with an inexplicable sense of foreboding. She resolved to wait at the gate until the Sultan returned.

Meanwhile, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen, during his city tour, ventured deep into narrow, dark lanes connected to a network of similar alleys, searching for the poorest dwellings and the starving residents hidden within dungeons. He had proceeded ahead of his personal armed contingent.

Suddenly, the dark lanes were blocked at multiple points by mysterious masked men wielding naked swords. Hundreds of swords struck at the head of the great Sultan. Despite being heavily outnumbered, he drew his sword and fought the masked attackers like a lion.

Under the simultaneous assault of hundreds of swords, the Sultan's own sword flew from his hand. Severely injured, his loyal flying horse turned ferocious, using its blood-covered head to scatter the masked assailants and carry the half-dead Sultan out of the maze of dark lanes. Meanwhile, the royal guards, who were frantically searching for the Sultan, saw his faithful horse with the unconscious Sultan draped across its back, blood flowing like a fountain from his head. The horse, ferocious and unstoppable, galloped at lightning speed towards the palace.

The flying horse stopped at the arched gate of the palace, bowing its head. Sultana Kota Rani saw blood and tears flowing from the horse's eyes. Her brave heart swelled with grief as she brought her unconscious husband down from the trembling horse's back.

The Sultan was taken to his room, and the best Reshi Hakims were summoned to the palace in an attempt to save him from his fatal injuries. Sultana Kota Rani's unwavering Reshi meditation and her continuous recitation of the 99 names of Allah without pause kept Sultan Sader-ud-Deen alive for four days and four nights. Yet, at last, his soul departed to Jannat to join his *Murshid*, Hazrat Bulbulshah.

Shams Swati, a venomous conspirator disguised as a Minister, harbored evil intentions toward Sultana Kota Rani. However, he completely altered his demeanor, presenting himself as a loyal supporter of the new Sultana, Queen Regent of Cashmere.

The shocking assassination and the abrupt, widespread agitation of the population, coupled with their extreme fury and cries for vengeance against the killers, disrupted all of Shams Swati's plans to seize the kingdom. The deep mourning of the entire population constrained him to remain in the shadows, unable to take advantage of the volatile situation.

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53
CHAPTER

Title of throne of Cashmere attributed to Miran Reshi and Shah Renchen underscore importance of throne for Sultana Kota Rani

After the assassination of her most loving husband, Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, Sultana Kota Rani became the most shocked queen on earth. She had lost everything. Earlier, her Sufi *Murshid*, Hazrat Bulbulshah, had passed away, and only a few months later, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah was assassinated.

The naming of the Cashmere Throne in honor of Miran Reshi and the first Buddhist Emperor of Cashmere, Shah Renchenshah of Shahnzi, was a clear indication that the Cashmere throne would always remain a symbol of religious unity.

The people of Cashmere and the ministers had complete trust in the capability and nobility of Sultana Kota Rani. This pious personality ruled efficiently until 1339 A.D.

However, like her husband, Sultana Kota Rani mistakenly trusted the cunning Swati minister, Shams Swati. He was venomous and fully aware of the growing popularity of Sultana Kota Rani. The people regarded her as the most successful and brave Reshi Queen of Cashmere, who upheld the principles of justice taught to her by Bulbulshah and Sultan Sader-ud-Deen. Shams Swati realized that she would continue to rule effectively until Hyder could assume the throne as Sultan.

Rishi Queen Kota Rani was a true lover of Cashmere. She was young, dynamic, and highly knowledgeable. This proved to be a setback for Shams Swati, as it sabotaged all his desires and ambitions. Without haste, he decided to work towards reducing the popularity of the Queen Regent, who was revered as the true savior of Cashmere.

Shams Swati outwardly posed as a loyal servant of the noble and brave Reshi Queen Sultana Kota Rani. However, behind the scenes, he accumulated significant power and manipulated the army chiefs of the time to come under his influence.

He began using dirty tactics of character assassination against her, clandestinely projecting her as an impure or disloyal widow, incompetent, and unworthy of serving as the Queen Regent on behalf of the minor Hyder.

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CHAPTER

Shamas Swati's Conspiracy

Shams Swati was aware that Hindu Brahmins expected, under the provisions of holy *Sati* rituals, that Sultana Kota Rani, belonging to the highest Reshi order, would perform Sati after the assassination of her husband. The demand for Sultana Kota Rani to perform Sati was part of Shams Swati's political goal to usurp the throne of Shah Mir. This throne had been designated by Sultana Kota Rani in the name of her husband, who was the first Shah of Cashmere, and Miran Reshi, the intellectual mentor of Sultana Kota Rani.

In Rainawari, a Sati pyre was decorated for the performance of Sati by Sultana Kota Rani. The conspirator, without coming forward himself, arranged for the Sati deck to be decorated by some paid priests, spreading the rumor that Sultana Kota Rani desired to burn herself in Sati. This conspiracy drew a large section of the population to Rainawari, where they believed they would witness a great sacrifice. People gathered, weeping and beating their chests.

However, being a strong devotee of the Reshi order as well as Hazrat Bulbulshah, Sultana Kota Rani personally addressed the huge gathering in Rainawari. She explained that those who had spread the rumors did so with evil intentions. She declared to the people that she was the widow of her Muslim husband, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah, and vowed to live with his name until her last breath.

She further stated that she would not remarry, as Hazrat Bulbulshah had taught her that widows who live to groom their orphaned children would be the first to enter Jannat. She affirmed that she was a true Reshi and would remain so, and that history would witness her preference for death over remarrying after the assassination of her husband. She emphasized her responsibility to serve as Queen Regent on behalf of the minor Hyder, rather than to burn her life on the Rainawari Sati pyre. The crowd became very emotional and chanted slogans of "Long live Sultana Rani." Sultana Kota Rani reminded them that her marriage to the Muslim Sultan was her own will, and their marriage rituals and *Nikah* ceremonies had been personally presided over by her *Murshid* saint, Hazrat Bulbulshah. Therefore, it was her duty to safeguard the interests of Sultan Sader-ud-Deen's son by serving as Queen Regent until Hyder Shah attained adulthood and was able to rule Cashmere as its king.

The mischief orchestrated by Shams Swati's agents backfired, and the people of Cashmere gave full support to Sultana Kota Rani. They encouraged her to live long and rule Cashmere until the minor Hyder Shah grew up. Despite this, Shams Swati continued to hatch conspiracies against Sultana Kota Rani behind the scenes. He directed his agents to spread false perceptions about her to tarnish her noble image.

To diminish Sultana Kota Rani's pure Reshi image, Shams Swati attempted to poison Reshi saints against her. He spread rumors about her refusal to follow Sati rituals after the death of her husband, Sultan Sader-ud-Deen. However, both in Sufi *Tasawwuf* and Reshi traditions, Sati was not considered necessary but was merely a tradition followed by a small section of the Hindu faith.

Hazrat Bulbulshah, after their *Bai'ah* (endorsement) on his hand, had tied Sultana Kota Rani and Renchenshah in the marriage knot by reciting their *Nikah* as the divine way of marriage after both adopted a new faith. After this religious ceremony, they were titled as Sultan and Sultana by Bulbulshah. Even top Buddhist and Hindu scholars appreciated the doctrines of human love that Bulbulshah recited in his *Khutba*, where he advised non-Muslims not to burn widows through Sati.

How could such a strong, intellectual, and brave-hearted queen breach the advice of her *Murshid*? Moreover, she had the responsibility to protect the sovereign claim of her only son, Hyder Shah. However, the conspirator's purpose was to provoke different sections of society against her.

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CHAPTER

Exemplary administrative achievements of Sultana Kota Rani as Reshi Queen Regent

The secret conspiracies against the throne continued, particularly when Sultana Kota Rani glorified and named the Cashmere throne in Reshi terms, combining the names of her husband, Shah Renchenshah, and her ancestral saint, Reshi Miran, as the Shah Mir throne. By posing as the most loyal to the throne, Shams Swati managed to retain the same ministerial position and status he had enjoyed during Sultan Sader-ud-Deen Renchenshah's reign and in the court of the noble Reshi Queen Kota Rani.

Shams Swati was as clever as a fox, waiting for the opportune time to strike. Historical records bear witness to the fact that Shams Swati struck hard against the noble Reshi Queen after her victory over Achala. Achala was a rebellious, dacoit-like anarchist who had revolted against the Reshi Queen and waged war against her rule. His connections lay with the conflicting tribes of Sussala and Chachala.

For several years, Kota Rani ruled Cashmere efficiently. However, Shams Swati, through his agents, spread false rumors about the return of the fugitive Suha Deva and his brother Uday Deva to Cashmere. When Shams Swati realized that if this actually occurred, he would lose all chances of becoming the king of Cashmere, he spread other false rumors, alleging an illicit relationship between Sultana Kota Rani and the brother of the ex-king of Cashmere, Suha Deva. At times, he even identified Achala as Uday Deva.

Shams Swati further spread rumors claiming that Sultana Kota Rani had secretly married the rebellious dacoit Achala. At other times, he alleged that she had fled to Kishtwar, where the Cashmere treasure was supposedly hidden.

In Cashmere, throughout the Buddhist, Hindu, and new Muslim eras, a widow's second marriage was considered the gravest slander and an evil act. Among pure Brahman families in Hindu tradition, marriage to a widow was regarded as an extreme sin. How could anyone imagine that ex-King Suha Deva or his brother would marry a Muslim widow? Any reference to such claims ridicules the character of the Lohara dynasty.

The majority of Hindu Reshis, Muslim scholars, and Buddhist saints rejected these rumors outright. Since the Lohara dynasty had lost its respect in Cashmere after Suha Deva's escape, those figures who failed to resist the onslaught of Zulqader Khan and abandoned the people of Cashmere were never respected again.

In such circumstances, it was impossible for the strong Reshi Queen of Cashmere, Sultana Kota Rani, who had made great sacrifices, to imagine rebuilding any relationship with fugitives who were hated by the people of Cashmere. Deliberate confusion was constantly created by unidentified agents of radical groups throughout the kingdom to undermine Sultana Kota Rani.

When Sultana Kota Rani herself led an armed campaign against the rebellious Achala, not a single soldier from Shams Swati's contingent joined her efforts. Despite this, the iron queen of Cashmere beheaded Achala with extraordinary valor, earning the admiration of the people of Cashmere. This critical moment prompted the conspirator Shams Swati to act decisively.

Nefarious designs were executed as part of a character assassination campaign orchestrated by Shams Swati's agents. Their purpose was to unseat Sultana Kota Rani from the Reshi-named Shah Mir throne—a name she had given the throne based on the doctrines of Hazrat Bulbulshah and Miran Reshi.

Shams Swati's agents even falsely portrayed Achala as a friend of Sultana Kota Rani or as the brother of the fugitive king Suha Deva, who had waged war against her. These mischievous rumors were contradictory, as no ruler would encourage armed rebellion against their own rule and throne. The queen herself came out to the battlefield, sword in hand, and proved her bravery by defeating Achala.

The brave Reshi Queen demonstrated the valor of the Reshi ideology, akin to how Kashyap Reshi severed the head of the evil Jalabhava. Similarly, Sultana Kota Rani severed Achala's head with a *khanjar* (dagger) gifted to her by Sultan Sader-ud-Deen. She placed Achala's head on the tip of her sword to show the people of Cashmere that she had vanquished him. This victory deeply frustrated Shams Swati, who had been crawling like a cobra around the kingdom, disguised as a loyalist, until Achala's death.

One Ibrahim Reshi, also known as Reshi Peer, who was the *Raj Guru* of Kota Rani and her son Hyder, resided in Bodh-e-Gaer (presently Batayaar). He had already predicted to Kota Rani that her own minister, whom she considered most loyal, would eventually betray her.

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CHAPTER

Reshi Tarangni of Cashmere was revolution of thoughts and ideologies in Cashmere

The Reshi orders promoted and protected by Sultana Kota Rani were her greatest contribution to making Cashmere an ideal abode for a composite Reshi culture of the highest order. Sultana Kota Rani, who is mostly remembered as the administrative and royal face of Cashmere, possessed inherent Reshi power from her childhood.

From the moment Sultana Kota Rani opened her eyes after birth in Cashmere, she embarked on a pious voyage toward an unknown spiritual destination of Reshiyat. However, she had to navigate through turbulent tides of terror and violence inflicted upon Cashmere by various forces.

To preserve the Cashmere civilization, Sultana Kota Rani had to take over the reins of Cashmere as a regent queen. Therefore, her political character predominantly occupied the pages of Cashmere's history, while her contributions to protecting and safeguarding spiritualism and Reshiyat in Cashmere remained highly distinguished and deserving of esteem.

Sultana Kota Rani provided equal respect to Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic Tasawuf (Sufi) cultures in Cashmere. She was acutely aware that, since the beginning of the population of Cashmere, there were pagan Buddhists in this paradise-like land. Among them was a divine group whose members would sit alone in the trunks of trees, caves, and forests to worship divine powers.

The people of Cashmere called them Reshis, as they consciously abandoned delicious and savory things, as well as physical and spiritual lusts. "Reshi" is actually a Sanskrit word that means a person who has erased their identity and become a true individual, free from evil desires.

Reshis lived simple lives with modest food habits, consuming tasteless items like wild cassava (*Hand* in Kashmiri), wild greens (*Woopal Hawk*), bitter fruits, and inedible grains—things that were neither luxurious nor appealing to the body or palate. They often worshipped on mountain summits, lake shores, and riverbanks.

These pious Reshis engaged in penance, suppressing all worldly desires of the soul. Even Sultana Kota Rani, in honor of such Reshi saints during their *Urus* and annual festival days, would strictly remain vegetarian and eat the same food as the respective Reshi saints.

Analyzing Sultana Kota Rani's characteristics as a Reshi queen, we find that she was devoid of greed, lust, and ego. She abandoned her own luxuries, opposed her father Ramachandra and Emperor Suha Deva, and rejected the treasures they had accumulated. Instead, she stood firm as a rock for Cashmere and its people.

Sultana Kota Rani did not indulge in the pleasures of power, whether as the queen of Sader-ud-Deen or as a regent queen on behalf of her minor son, Hyder. Instead, she was constantly engaged in war against the enemies of humanity and Cashmere. Her predominant desire was to achieve the pleasures of the soul.

She received proper guidance from Hazrat Bulbulshah, who enlightened her not only about the Khurasani Sufi streams but also detailed the spiritual importance of Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jeelani, Hazrat Abul Hassan Shazli of the Shadhilya Sufi stream, and Hazrat Ibn-e-Arabi of Andalusia, Spain.

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CHAPTER

Joint spiritual Power in Cashmere created with strenuous efforts blunted Powerful Swords of Mongol Terror

The glittering rays emanating from the ideologies of Sufiyat and Tasawuf from ancient cultures of Khurasan, Baghdad, and Persia reached all around the world. In Cashmere, too, they removed the history of falsehood and further enriched and enlightened the region with the light of truthfulness.

Like Buddhist and Hindu Reshis, Muslim Reshis, theologians, and God-lovers also pierced through hearts with spiritual grace and the light of faith.

The swords of Mongols sowed the seeds of hatred, but the arrival of Bulbulshah during the same period won the hearts of the people of Cashmere. The arrival of the light of faith through Sufi Reshi saints quickly spread to all corners of Cashmere. This victory of hearts was a victory of Reshiyat, a victory of spirituality, and a victory of reality.

The people of Cashmere, known for their knowledge, ability, and spirituality from ancient times to the countries of the East and the West, enriched their composite spiritual culture by adopting the best from various streams. When the elders of the religion of Islam remained hidden from view, thousands of Reshis, friends of God, and darvishes arrived from turbulent areas and settled in Cashmere after the successful mission of Bulbulshah.

As already pointed out in the previous chapter, only a few decades after the martyrdom of Sultana Kota Rani, Laleshwari (Lala-e-Daed) and Nund Reshi (Sheikh-ul-Alam) rose to prominence in Cashmere. Sheikh-ul-Alam's vision was a continuation of the agreement between Bulbulshah and Kota Rani. Like Bulbulshah, Sheikh-ul-Alam also presented Reshiyat through Hanafi doctrines. His statement reads: *"Awal Reshi Ahmed Reshi, Doyim Reshi Hazrat Owais Aao, Treyim Reshi Zulka Reshi, Chorum Reshi Hazrat Miran Reshi Aao, Paenchim Reshi Ruma Reshi, Shaum Hazrat Plas Aao, Stams Karham Dashna Dashi, Be Kus Reshi Te Mai Kya Naa."*

Sheikh-ul-Alam gave extraordinary importance to the great Prophet and termed him the leader of Reshi Tasawuf orders. The other Reshis of Cashmere mentioned in the order list from the second to seventh places prove the uniqueness of Reshiyat in Cashmere.

Just as Khurasan or Baghdad had dozens of Sufi Tareeqats, Cashmere had Reshi Tareeqats associated with each Reshi mentioned by Sheikh-ul-Alam. The connectivity of Khurasan's ascetic culture and Cashmere's Reshiyat was evident during the time of Abdul Rahman Abu Muslim when Lalata Datiya Muktapada, a powerful king of Cashmere, supported the ideology of Khurasan to suppress the Banu Ummaya clans, similar to what he did to Junaid during King Hisham's time.

The first Reshi, as named by Sheikh-ul-Alam, is the great Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW), referred to as Hazrat Ahmed Reshi. The second Reshi is Hazrat Owais Qarni. The third Reshi is Zulka Reshi, the fourth Reshi is Miran Reshi, and the fifth Reshi is Ruma Reshi, and so on.

It is evident that the Reshis mentioned by Sheikh-ul-Alam were Reshis of the 13th and 14th centuries. This includes Miran Reshi, who a prominent Reshi was belonging to the clan of Gupt Reshis living in forests during Suha Deva's time. Sultana Kota Rani named the throne in his honor and that of her husband.

The identities of most of the Reshis mentioned by Sheikh-ul-Alam are debatable, but he referred to them irrespective of their school of thought or respective faith. He referred to them as sons of the soil of Cashmere.

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58
CHAPTER

Eternal importance of divine music Sama e Saadaat, the spiritual instrument to pierce through souls in Cashmere

In Cashmere, many historical chronicles are narrated on santoor and rabab by historians and storytellers. Some stories and tales that are not recorded in any book are passed down orally by them. Accordingly, generations carry these tales forward in their respective cities and villages.

There is no doubt about the first great Reshi mentioned by Sheikh-ul-Alam. The first great Reshi refers to the Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Mujtaba Muhammad Rasoolullah (SAW), and Owais Reshi refers to Hazrat Owais Qarni.

The other five Reshis, of whom the sixth and seventh are Hazrat Sheikh-ul-Alam himself, are from Cashmere. Zulka Reshi is associated with Dandak Van, a forest in the Hamal area of Kamraj. There was also a village by the same name, and Hazrat Sheikh-ul-Alam considers Zulka Reshi to have resided there.

Sheikh-ul-Alam describes Hazrat Miran Reshi as someone who constantly battled his nafs (worldly desires). He would only drink a small amount of water, just enough to wet his teeth. Regarding Hazrat Ruma Reshi, it is said that he earned a place in Paradise.

Hazrat Owais Qarni was among God's friends and a God-fearing individual. Hazrat Muhammad Rasoolullah (SAW) praised him, saying, "Owais of Qarn is one of the best followers in kindness and generosity" (Qarn was a village in Yemen).

To understand what Sheikh-ul-Alam meant by Zulka Reshi, we must study the period of Kota Rani. Hazrat Zulka Reshi was one of the great Reshis of ancient times. He lived in a village called Dandak in the

Pargana forest of Hamal and spent his entire life in worship and austerity.

Zulka Reshi, a resident of the Dandak forest, worshipped God with immense devotion, surviving on the fruits of silk bushes. He was a true lover of God and expressed his yearning for divine proximity, praying, "Oh God, take me there too."

The Reshi school believes that Miran Reshi was a saint from Cashmere, residing in Safapora. He meditated in the mountains of Cashmere and worshipped at a place called Rishi Vani. This 83-year-old Reshi, who lived during the Lohara dynasty, was known for his fasting, which he would break with only a few drops of water. Miran Reshi was considered suicidal due to his extreme austerity and dedication.

According to Reshi Nama, after his death, his body disappeared to an unknown destination. Miran Reshi, a resident of Rishwani, was an ideal Reshi for Sultana Kota Rani, much like Ibrahim Reshi.

Similarly, another Reshi highly regarded by Kota Rani was Ruma Reshi, who disappeared from a cave in Pulwama and never returned. As a true Reshi, he was free from hatred and was exceptional in worship and piety.

The author of *Waqia Cashmir* mentions that Ruma Reshi lived during the reign of Raja Jaishankar in Cashmere. He secluded himself in a cave in the village of Ramuha, Pulwama, which is still known by his name. Satisfied with wild herbs and greens, he abstained from meat or any kind of grain and avoided human interaction. Toward the end of his life, he subsisted on milk, and his body was reduced to mere skin and bones. It is said that Ruma Reshi lived to be 322 years old. Remarkably, with each passing year, his teeth would fall out and new ones would grow. He disappeared from the cave during the reign of Raja Jagdev Daata.

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CHAPTER

Khufia {Gupt} Tareeqat of spirituality orginated from Ren Mountains of Shahnzi and mystic caves of Reshies in Cashmere

Sultana Kota Rani had understood the importance of cave meditation from the Sharda Peeth records. Since the time of Lalitaditya Muktapada, there is substantial evidence of cave meditation in Cashmere. Attri Gupt (Secret) Reshi, upon his arrival in Cashmere, is said to have initiated the flow of the secret Ganga, still known as Gupt Ganga, from the Hari Chandran mountains.

During the time of Atkanashka, Buddhist stupas on the Zabarwan mountains were surrounded by hundreds of Reshis like Zulka, who lived in caves. Shanga Bibi is also mentioned as conducting Shiva mystic dances in such caves. Miran Reshi meditated in the Safapora cave.

Historical and literary references mention other distinguished Reshis like Dawar Reshi, Sheeban Reshi, and Angun Reshi. These saints lived in solitude, and mountain goats would reportedly approach them in the forests to provide milk. Wild animals often walked alongside them in harmony.

Lederman Reshi is referred to in the context of the Lohara dynasty during Mahmud Ghaznavi's attempted invasion of Cashmere through the Noorpur Gali at Tosamaidan. At the time, Lederman Reshi was meditating at the Sita Spring near the base of Tosamaidan. Mahmud Ghaznavi, having heard of the saint's spiritual accomplishments, set up camp at Damamsar and sought an audience with him. Reshi closed the door of his cave and refused to meet him, instead instructing him to express his desire from outside. Ghaznavi requested Reshi's blessings for his victory in Cashmere. The saint replied, "What you did to the Somnath temple, the curse of the same will follow you in Cashmere." True to his words, Sangram Raja, a Reshi king, led a large Cashmere army and inflicted a humiliating defeat on Mahmud Ghaznavi.

Plasman Reshi, the brother and disciple of Lederman Reshi, was deeply revered. Ramu Rishi was also aware of his spiritual stature. Plasman Reshi achieved great spiritual heights by accompanying his brother Lederman Reshi and undergoing rigorous practices. They abstained from food during the day and refrained from sleeping at night. They would break their fast by licking the white bark of trees. They lived in caves for years, away from public view, and would occasionally isolate themselves in the cave of Boma Zoha.

It is said that Eid-ul-Adha was celebrated in the Bumzu Cave for one year. These caves and caverns became places of devotion and worship. Before converting to Islam, Plasman Reshi had two sons, Khalasman Reshi and Yasman Reshi.

When Plasman Reshi passed away at the age of 118 years, Yasman Reshi's beard had turned completely white, and Khalasman Reshi had some white hairs as well. Interestingly, not a single hair on Plasman Reshi's body had turned white. He is buried in Kariwa Bijbihara. After receiving training from his father, Plasman Reshi attained spiritual perfection and virtue.

After the demise of his guru, Plasman Reshi visited Mount Shawalak and later returned to Cashmere. He received further training from the disciples of Sirhang Reshi, who were themselves great saints. He overcame suicidal tendencies, abstained from indulgent foods, and lived a long, virtuous life.

Yasman Reshi, the brother of Khalasman Reshi, was a pious and God-fearing saint who renounced worldly pleasures. He spent most of his life in the wilderness among beasts, hidden from public view. It is said that lions served as his mode of transport wherever he went. After the death of his brother Khalasman Reshi, Yasman Reshi would sit beside his grave, guarding it. He passed away during the reign of Sultan Alauddin and was buried beside his brother.

Soran Reshi, a disciple of Khalasman Reshi, devoted his life to worship and austerity. For forty years, he meditated in a cave in Kanar, a village in Pargana Nagam, surviving solely on the rotten leaves of wild greens. Descriptions of Reshis before the period of Sultana Kota Rani in the Sanskrit chronicles of Sharda Peeth note that "the Ganges originates from Mahadev Jata," and such individuals were referred to as Reshis. The term "Reshi" originates from the Sanskrit word meaning "a person who has erased their identity and become a true seeker, free from greed, lust, and ego." Reshis rejected worldly pleasures and focused on spiritual devotion.

As history progressed, the advent of Islam brought a spiritual awakening. The light of Islam spread from Arabia, dispelling falsehood and illuminating the world with truth. The teachings of Islam in Iraq and Iran competed with idolatry and arson in India. While Muslim kings conquered these lands with their swords, it was the theologians, dervishes, and God-fearing elders who truly spread the message of Islam, touching hearts with spiritual grace.

This spiritual victory marked the triumph of Islam. The Cashmiri people, known for their knowledge and spirituality, embraced this enlightenment. However, during Zulqadar Khan's attack, many Reshis and Pandits were killed. Some Reshis survived by hiding in caves and mountains. Over time, the abundance of supernatural phenomena caused many names and symbols associated with these saints' places and tombs to disappear. Hazrat Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Reshi mentions only six Reshis in his accounts.

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CHAPTER

Extant Reshi Peers in Cashmere are unique combination of multi religious theologies

During Sultana Kota Rani's period, a new breed of ascetics known as Reshi Peers emerged. Reshi Guru Ibrahim Reshi, the family guru of Sultana Kota Rani and her brother Rawanachandra Udhay Deove, was termed "Peer" after the arrival of Bulbul Shah, who referred to the Cashmere valley as "Reshiwari" as well as "Peeriwari." The term "Peer" was used for respectable and pious persons.

The Reshi Guru of Sultana Kota Rani was also called Reshi Peer. The abode of Kota Rani was in Buddha Gear Batiyar. This is the same place where she committed self-martyrdom when Shams Swati tried to forcibly marry her.

Under the atrocities of Shams Swati, Ibrahim Reshi was later forced to leave the abode. However, in subsequent centuries, various other Reshi Peers returned to protect this abode, not only in the name of Reshi Peers but also in honor of Sultana Kota Rani, who sacrificed her life rather than allow Shams Swati to touch her body on the night of the forced wedding.

In subsequent generations, during Sultan Shah Jahan's time, the son of Pandit Govind Kaul, a resident of Battayar Mohalla in Ali Kadal (the fifth bridge over the river Jhelum) in Srinagar, became a great saint of very high spiritual power and performed several miracles. Both Pandits and Muslims used to throng to his home in Ali Kadal to pay respects and seek solutions to their worldly problems.

He would deliver sermons and resolve people's issues. Thus, this class of joint faiths became a Reshi for Hindus and a Peer for Muslims.

Reshi Peer had spiritual and intellectual discourses with Saint Roopa Bhawani and other well-known learned persons of that era. During this period, when Iftikhar Khan was the Governor of Cashmere, a massive fire broke out in Srinagar city, engulfing the entire Ali Kadal Mohalla. In a state of panic, people approached Reshi Peer for help.

He went to the site and brought out the bridal sandal of Sultana Kota Rani, which she had worn before sacrificing her life. Reshi Peer threw the sandal of Reshi Queen Sultana Kota Rani onto the fire caused by Aurangzeb's forces, and the flames were immediately doused.

During the radical rule of Emperor Aurangzeb, Reshi Peer was arrested, tortured, and forced to abandon the title "Peer" and leave the abode of Sultana Kota Rani, which he had saved from burning by throwing her sandal into the fire. The king was infuriated that, being a Pandit, Reshi Peer was also referred to as a Peer. He sent his courtiers to Reshi Peer's home to arrest him.

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CHAPTER

Cashmere treasure from time of Sultana Kota Rani

During Sultana Kota Rani's time, the nearest, closest, and accessible route between Kashgar and Kashmir was through the Khanjreeb Pass. History is full of details about how Dulcha Zulqader Khan attacked Kashmir to loot the treasure in 1320 A.D. Kota Rani's father, Ramachandra, and Emperor Suha Deva shared a lust for wealth similar to Queen Dida, Mihirakula, Sussala, and Harsha, accumulating treasure instead of securing their kingdom. Kota Rani always suggested creating a defense army in the style of Lalitaditya Muktapada and proceeding to Tatar or Mongolistan to dismantle their infrastructure of terror. However, her advice was ignored by both top administrators of Kashmir.

From the time of Reshi Queen Sultana Kota Rani, when Suha Deva escaped with a huge Kashmiri treasure, its remnants are still evident through the most authentic historical and official records.

The Kashgar-Kashmir route was both a trade and Silk Road. For the inhabitants of Kashmir, it was an important stopover. All of Xinjiang was referred to as Yarkand. Even today, there exists a travelers' inn known as Yarkand Sarai, situated on the left bank of the Jhelum at Safa Kadal in Srinagar, where the treasure was placed in ancient locker rooms, which still exist in dilapidated conditions.

During Sultana Kota Rani's time, the area of the present Idgah served as an important halting point for traders traveling along the Silk Road. Large trade fairs were held in the vicinity of the Yarkand Sarai, where Tibetan, Turkish, and Yarkandi traders bought and sold goods. Even before Sultana Kota Rani's era, during the 6th century, the prominent historian and scholar Hiuen Tsang visited and stayed there. It was the treasury (Toshakhana) of Suha Deva and Ramachandra.

This research on Reshi Queen Sultana Kota Rani provided opportunities to uncover details about the secrets of the Kashmiri treasure. It originated from Kashmir's ancestral Hindu temples, Reshi abodes, Buddhist viharas, and Muslim khanqahs. Even Dulcha Zulqader Khan's army lost 70,000 soldiers at the Devsar Ganjan site, where some of the treasure had been buried by the fleeing king Suha Deva. However, by the time Zulqader Khan reached Ganjan Devsar, the treasure had been removed by the fleeing king, leaving him empty-handed.

This research will undoubtedly aid the well-wishers of Kashmir in tracing every pearl and jewel to return them to the Hindu temples, Buddhist viharas, Muslim khanqahs, and Reshi abodes that existed during Sultana Kota Rani's time.

An RTI activist, who sought information on the treasure from the J&K government, estimated its current value to be at least Rs 100,000 crore. This treasure, left behind by Suha Deva, was too vast for him to transport when Ramachandra demanded his share.

Later, trunks containing the treasures of Sultana Kota Rani, Kashgar, Bulbulshah, Shah Hamdan's jewels, and tones of gold from shrines such as Makhdoom Sahib and Dastgeer Sahib were stored in the Toshakhana. General Mohammad Moheeti of Kashgar brought nine trunks of shrine jewels from Domail to the Toshakhana. Donations of gold and diamonds from shrines like Dargah Hazratbal were also placed there.

Historical records indicate that Suha Deva carried a major portion of the treasure to Yarqand Sarai on the banks of the Vitasta (Jhelum). It is rumored that only one compact treasure box was transported in a jeep by Rozanthal, a Russian or French advisor, when he accompanied Maharaja Hari Singh in his jeep on October 25, 1947. Reports also suggest that Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad sent two treasure trunks to the Teen Murti House of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1962, during the Indo-China war. Media leaks published in *India Today* magazine revealed that some treasure trunks were opened in cabinet committee meetings.

The J&K government unofficially conducted an inventory in 1983 through mysterious foreigner Ryen Sotheby of London, which justified earlier treasure thefts. Bringing Sotheby, a foreigner, into the Toshakhana was scandalous. Recent auctions of Kashmiri sapphires in international markets seem linked to this 1983 Toshakhana scandal.

During Sultana Kota Rani's time, she fervently advocated for utilizing the vast treasury at Yarqand Sarai to establish a Kashmiri army to counter Mongol threats. However, her suggestions were dismissed. Suha Deva, obsessed with the treasure, attacked Ramachandra inside the Yarqand Sarai treasury when he demanded his share. This scuffle resulted in Ramachandra's critical injury and imprisonment at Inderkote.

Suha Deva eventually fled, leaving part of the treasure at Ganjan Devsar before escaping through the Peer Panchal mountains to Kishtwar. Historical records suggest that fractions of Suha Deva's treasure were taken to Central Asia, Shanxi, Persia, Basra, Khurasan, and Baghdad. Links between the Shanxi Raina mountains, Afaki Khwaja khanqahs of Kashgar, and Kashmir reveal General Mohammad Moheeti's decision to return a portion of the treasure to Kashmiri waqfs and khanqahs.

Dulcha Zulqader Khan's invasion aimed to seize Kashmir's vast treasures, including blue sapphires, gold, and jewels. However, Suha Deva's escape to Kishtwar with the treasure foiled his plans. Local prisoners led Zulqader Khan's forces to icy graves in the Peer Panchal mountains through hazardous routes prone to avalanches, sacrificing themselves for revenge.

This historic event demonstrates that Kashmiris, even in defeat, remain resilient. Dr. Stein, in his preamble to his translation of *Rajatarangini*, emphasizes that no sword can tame Kashmiris—they only bow to knowledge and love.

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62
CHAPTER

Shamas Swati removed all the veils

Sultana Kota Rani had silenced all her enemies, adversaries, and conspirators who were active day and night against her through her constant triumphs, like the defeat of Lalta Datiya Muktapada. By inflicting a humiliating defeat on Achala, Sultana Kota Rani not only proved her warriorship and effective command on the battlefield but also positioned herself to unearth the conspirators of her empire from their hiding places, like dead snakes.

Her own brother, Rawanchandra (also known as Udhadevoe or Abhenow Devoe), was her most loyal ally, but venomous conspirators never hesitated to spread rumors about him. After her victory over Achala, she was planning to hold a court meeting in her palace. This was a critical day in the history of Kashmir. Shams Swati was waiting for the opportune moment to unveil his true intentions and take over the Shah Miran Reshi throne of Kashmir.

The day Sultana Kota Rani defeated the terror leader of the Achala and Sussala terror tribes, Shams Swati realized that this victory would make the Queen Regent more powerful. He also detected traces of doubt in her eyes whenever she looked at him. Even during the war against Achala, Sultana Kota Rani did not ask him, the Minister of Armed Forces, to accompany her. This was a red flag for Shams Swati, signaling that he was under suspicion.

As Sultana Kota Rani's victory procession was received on the streets of Srinagar with showers of flowers, gold coins, and sheerini, Shams Swati swung into action with his loyal conspirators. He apprehended that, given her display of Achala's severed head, his head might be next.

He decided to act swiftly and remove her from the throne during the victory celebrations.

While carrying Achala's severed head on her sword, Sultana Kota Rani's victorious procession reached the palace. Shams Swati removed his veiled facade and raided the palace with his loyal soldiers. The Queen was encircled by Swati's forces at the gate of the palace. The sword carrying Achala's head was snatched from her, and she was arrested.

Looking at her traitorous minister leading the rebellion, Sultana Kota Rani yelled at Shams Swati: "You traitor of Kashmir! Now I understand it was you, the devil, who assassinated my husband, the great Sultan of Kashmir!"

Before she could utter more words, Shams Swati snatched her sword and Achala's head. She was shackled with iron chains around her neck, arms, and feet, and imprisoned in Bodh Gear, the meditation abode of Reshi Peer in Batayaar.

Shams Swati had already worked hard through his agents to tarnish her high image in the eyes of the Muslim Sufi and Reshi orders. He feared that her triumph over Achala would further enhance her popularity. Convinced that he would never be able to sit on the throne while she held power, he decided to end her rule the same day she achieved her victory.

To sow discord, stories were fabricated to create a rift between Sultana Kota Rani and her brother, Rawanchandra. However, when Rawanchandra supported his sister in battle, these false narratives lost their impact.

Despite widespread rumors, Sultana Kota Rani never doubted her brother's loyalty. Even slanderous claims of her secret marriage to Achala were spread to confuse the masses. Some even suggested that Achala was the real Udhae Deove, the brother of the fugitive Suha Deove. However, these fabrications were laid to rest when the brave Queen crushed Achala's rebellion and led a victory procession with his severed head on her sword.

The reality was that Sultana Kota Rani's victory over Achala was a triumph for Kashmir. However, Shams Swati turned this day of victory into a tragic chapter in the history of Kashmir. While the kingdom celebrated, he struck at the palace in the evening.

As Sultana Kota Rani entered the palace with Achala's severed head on her sword, Shams Swati launched his betrayal. He surrounded the palace, killed her loyal guards, and declared himself the King of Kashmir. Shams Swati killed Rawanchandra, her loyal brother, and imprisoned Sultana Kota Rani, declaring himself ruler of the Shah Mir throne, which she had named after her husband and the Miran Reshi doctrines.

Shams Swati's betrayal against Sultan Sader-ud-Din Renchanshah and Sultana Kota Rani is a dark mark in the chronicles of Kashmir. His actions, including the assassination of Rawanchandra, were clear proof of his treachery.

After removing all veils of deceit, Shams Swati revealed himself as the hidden savage demon in the kingdom. He imprisoned Sultana Kota Rani in her meditation abode at Batayaar near Bulbul Shah's Khankah, sealing his betrayal in the annals of Kashmir's history.

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63
CHAPTER

Sultana Kota Rani's Martyrdom

Sultana Kota Rani was not only arrested, shackled, and put in jail but forced by Shams Swati to marry him. The assistants of the new Shah Mir king, Shams Swati, forced the noble and pious Sultana to wear a bridal dress. Even as a bride, she was tied with iron chains so that she would not be able to harm the new king of Kashmir. Her shackles, made of iron chains, while being made to wear a bridal dress, were a clear signal to her that she would be unable to resist the lust of Shams Swati. However, the dagger (Khanjar) which was gifted to her by Sultan Sader-ud-deen for self-protection had become part of her usual attire and remained with her even when she was iron-chained by the cruel king Shams Swati.

Dethroning Queen Sultana Kota Rani from the Holy Shah Miraan titled Reshi Throne, which was a symbol of Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist unity, was itself a diversion from the plural character of Kashmir to a radical order. Within hours, the misuse of authority over the same sacred Shah Miraan throne and the erasure of its Reshi status was a clear signal that Kashmir was being led into anarchy. This betrayal opened a new phase of immorality, massacres, killings, and the erasure of Bulbulshah's doctrines in Kashmir.

As already pointed out in this book, Shams Swati, like a venomous cobra, had an evil eye on the extraordinary beauty of Kota Rani from the very beginning. Immediately after taking over kingship in a ceremony he conducted in Swati style rather than any Sufi Tareeqat or Kashmiri ritual, he indicated the death of Reshi orders. After becoming king and sitting on the throne, he first ordered that Sultana Kota Rani, in her bridal dress, be brought to the courtroom. He had already ordered his loyal army force to put her in iron chains after making her wear the bridal dress. She was extraordinarily beautiful, and in her bridal dress, she glittered like the moon in shackles.

When Sultan Sader-ud-deen had arrived in Kashmir, one Malang Baba Gundi at Khanjreeb Pass had given a Khanjar (dagger) to the Sultan as a symbol of Ishq and resistance against terror. The Sultan gifted his own blue jewel-handled Khanjar to Sultana Kota Rani for personal protection forever and retained Baba Gundi's Khanjar with him. Since then, Sultana Kota Rani had made it a part of her attire and royal personality.

When Sultana Kota Rani was imprisoned and her sword was snatched from her by Shams Swati, no one detected the blue sapphire-handled Khanjar with her. The Regent Queen of Kashmir was disarmed on the victorious day, but the Sultan's gift given to her for self-protection remained with her intact. This is how, at Khanjreeb Pass, even today, the Baba Gundi episode is remembered in folklores in the kingdom, which led to the self-martyrdom of Sultana Kota Rani. Accordingly, no one detected the blue jewel-handled dagger, which continued to remain tied under her interior war belt. When Shams Swati's forces handed over the bridal dress to her and asked her to wear it, the dagger continued to remain concealed inside her bridal dress.

Shams Swati, the new king, was sitting on the magnificent Shah Miraan throne of Kashmir in the courtroom when Sultana Kota Rani was brought inside. Shams Swati, the usurper on the throne, told her that even though she was no longer the Queen of Kashmir, it was his desire that she continue to retain her status as Queen of the new king in power if she married him. His cobra-like eyes were focused on the Queen, who was shackled in chains but looked like an angel in her bridal dress. The same glow emanated from her mesmerizing countenance that had emerged from the face of Sultan Sader-ud-deen before his martyrdom. Shams Swati now had the audacity, after attaining kingship, to narrate a few words of praise about the extraordinary beauty of Sultana Kota Rani. However, he was immediately silenced by the imprisoned Queen, who asked him to shut his mouth and never dare to express such words of love.

Shams Swati, unaffected by her humiliating words, tried to convince her by offering conditional queenship. He told the imprisoned Sultana Kota Rani that he had already taken control of the empire and that no resistant force existed to stop him from doing whatever he wished. He was now the King of Kashmir and would rule until his last breath. He claimed he would prove to be a more successful king than her deceased husband, Sultan Sader-ud-deen. Therefore, as King, it was his right to not only take over the Shah Miraan throne but also claim the brave and beautiful Queen of the late Sultan. It was Swati culture, unlike their redundant Reshi culture of Kashmir, that Queens do not remain unmarried after their kings were slain.

The noble Queen Sultana Kota Rani, clad in a golden wedding dress, forcefully, like a lioness, tried to assault Shams Swati. However, her iron chains prevented her from reaching the throne. She roared with full force at him:

"You, Shams Swati! You traitor, murderer of my husband Sultan Sader-ud-deen, destroyer of our entire empire. I have now realized that you were a savage demon concealed and hidden in our kingdom. But remember my words—history of Kashmir will never forgive you."

Shams Swati felt threatened when the lioness pounced on him. In the scuffle, the Shah Miraan golden throne fell down along with its new usurper, Shams Swati, who had now become the Shah Mir. Shams Swati stood up in anger, took out his sword, and ordered the guards to bring Hyder Shah, the son of Sultana Kota Rani, to the court. He placed his naked sword on the neck of the young prince, Hyder Shah. The imprisoned Queen Regent shivered at the sight of her only son in the lap of enemy soldiers, with Shams Swati's naked sword threatening his life.

Shams Swati, furious after being pushed down along with his throne by Sultana Kota Rani, screamed loudly and demanded an instant decision from her to marry him. Otherwise, her little prince, Hyder Shah, would be beheaded, and his head would be exhibited in a procession as she had done with Achala's head. Ibrahim Reshi, Raj Guru of Sultana Kota Rani, who had been taking care of Hyder Shah, intruded into the courtroom and came forward to intervene between the new furious king and the imprisoned Queen. He yelled and implored King Shams Swati to stop threatening Hyder Shah. However, he was silenced by the soldiers of the new king. The frail Reshi saint was grabbed by the neck and slammed to the ground. The soldiers began to prepare to behead him before Shams Swati could carry out his threat against baby Hyder Shah.

At this critical juncture, Sultana Kota Rani realized the monstrous Shams Swati had reached the extreme level of savage revenge. She understood that only she could save the innocent lives of Ibrahim Reshi and her son, Hyder Shah. She decided to handle the critical situation and horrific madness of Swati terror carefully. Otherwise, the demon would kill them both.

The imprisoned Queen Regent Sultana Kota Rani yelled with full force, like a lioness caged in chains, at Shams Swati Shah Mir to leave her son and Guru. She declared she was ready to marry him. She screamed with agony:

"Shams Swati! I am ready to hand over my pious body to you if you leave both my Guru and my son, Hyder. Let them proceed to safety out of the city."

Shams Swati, overjoyed that Kota Rani had agreed to surrender to him, promptly snatched the sword from the soldier who had raised it to behead Raj Guru Ibrahim Reshi. The Reshi saint was saved at the last moment. Sultan Shams Shah Mir instructed his soldiers not to kill Ibrahim Guru and Hyder Shah. The ecstasy and excitement of the king after hearing Kota Rani's consent made him extraordinarily happy. In his excitement, he announced that Kota Rani had become his most beloved Queen. He declared that henceforth, her orders would be the orders of the state.

Shams Swati handed over Hyder Shah, the three-year-old child, back to Raj Guru. He ordered his soldiers to allow Raj Guru and Hyder to leave the city unharmed. They were free to go wherever they desired. The orders were immediately followed. Sultana Kota Rani yelled to Raj Guru to take Hyder to a safe place and protect his life forever. Raj Guru took Hyder in his lap and left the courtroom. Tears rolled down from Sultana Kota Rani's beautiful eyes. Her tears trickled down the iron knots of her chains, appearing as if the iron chains themselves were bowing down with shame under the weight of her melancholic drops. Sultana paid her last farewell look at her son as Raj Guru reached the threshold of the courtroom.

Shams Swati Shah Mir was ecstatic that Sultana Kota Rani had promised to surrender herself to him. He trusted her word, knowing that she had never broken a promise. In his excitement, he placed his crown on the chained feet of Sultana Kota Rani and promised her that she would rule Kashmir as his Queen while he would remain a symbolic king. However, Sultana Kota Rani mocked him, questioning whether Queens in his Swati culture were kept chained.

The new Shah Mir, Shams Swati, himself unlocked her chains and asked the attendants to leave the courtroom. He unfolded the throne and converted it into a wider wedding bed in honor of the Queen. After locking the room from the inside, he decorated the Shah Miraan throne as a wedding bed. Shams Swati then picked up Sultana Kota Rani's hand softly, with lust and love, and brought her close to the bed. He asked her to fulfill her promise. However, before he could proceed, Sultana Kota Rani roared at him to stop and never come near her.

Sultana Kota Rani swiftly took out her protective dagger (Khanjar) and remembered her husband Sultan Sader-ud-deen's words that someday this dagger would protect her honor. She groaned like a lioness:

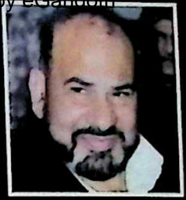
"You traitor Shams Swati! You can take my body, but you cannot take my spirit. I will leave my body on this throne, but my pure spirit will live forever in paradise."

With these words, she swung the blue jewel-handled dagger in the air and stabbed herself repeatedly. She cried out to Shams Swati:

"You, Swati! Marry each piece of my body, but my soul will live in the heaven of purity forever."

This historical juncture proved that Sultana Kota Rani achieved everlasting triumph. She was not defeated, while the new King Shams Swati, the usurper of the Shah Miraan throne, was left to wipe Sultana Kota Rani's pure red blood from his own face, crown, and Shah Miraan throne. He remained shell-shocked, unable to approach his own throne, which he had converted into a wedding bed. He could not dare to touch his crown, which lay under the feet of Sultana Kota Rani's dead body. Her lips, in death, had completed the recitation of the 99 names of God.

* * *



Khwaja Farooq Renzushah is prominent and distinguished author of Kashmir known at National and international level also for his literary contribution in different languages. His first book was published in 1975 followed by series of books out of which *Jeel Jalti Hain* was taken up for high profile Bollywood Film starring Faisal Khan *"Chinar-Dastaan e ishiq"* by Shagun productions.

Renzushah's books include *"Zakhmon Ki Salgirah," "Discovery of Kashmir," "Girti Bulandiyan," "Inqalab Ka Shaheed," "Jeel Jalti Hay," "Bhanwar Meri Manzil" "Doobtay Kinaray," " Water on Fire." "Tears and Blood"*, Cashmere Bears throne and many others in various languages which received applause at highest literary circles.

Renzushah's key note address on Sufi ideology delivered at world prestigious think tank Jhon Hopkins Washington had enhanced image of rich civilization of Kashmir among high profile audience of western fraternity.

Renzushah was bestowed with Award of honour by President of India A. P. G Abu Kalam at SKICC and Prime Minister of India for his intellectual contribution in culture and Literature.

Renzushah proved his acumen in administration also by holding key positions of V. C. Srinagar Development Authority, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal corporations, Director Information, Deputy commissioner Budgam, Additional Divisional commissioner Kashmir, Director Local bodies, head of CSC digital India bodies and other distinguished positions in various other departments.

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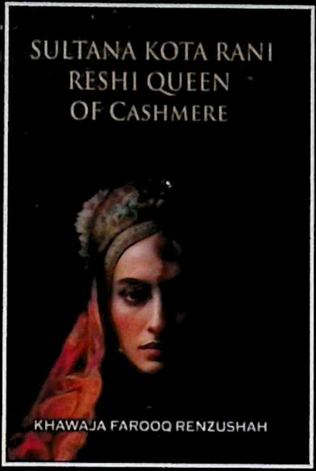
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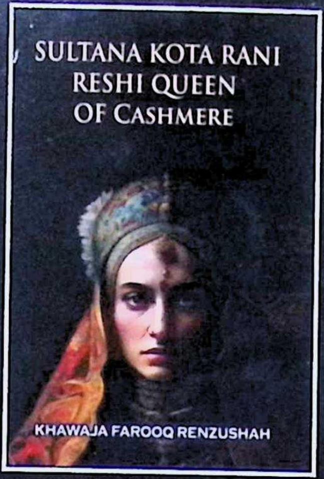
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